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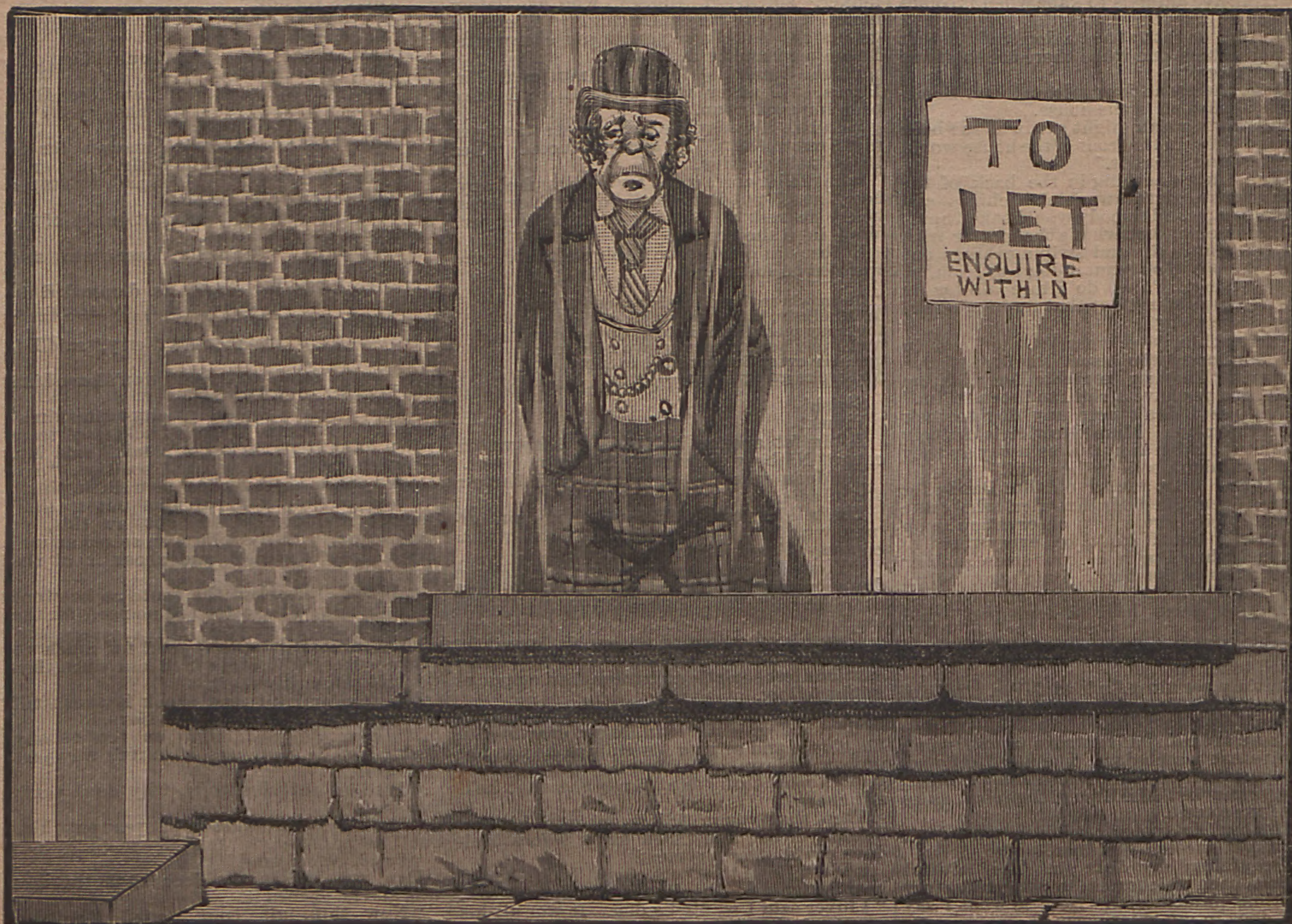
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MULDOON'S HOTEL

Part II.

BY TOM TEASER.

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On the next day passers-by noticed a sad looking man standing by the reading room window, looking out upon the street. He had his hands thrust deep down in his pockets and there was an air of deep dejection on his countenance. The man was Muldoon.

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MULDOON'S HOTEL.

By TOM TEASER,

Author of "The Two Boy Clowns; or, A Summer with a Circus," "Jim, Jack and Jim," etc., etc.

PART II.

PART XV.

THE new year had opened auspiciously for Muldoon's Hotel, and there was as much fun as there was business, which was as it ought to be.

Roger lived upon snaps, and if he was not working them off on his dad, somebody else got them, so that they were not wasted.

One of his latest rackets was upon Muldoon, who was ready to bite at all times, in spite of the fact that he had been himself bitten so many times before.

"I say, pop, why don't you get a dog?" asked Roger one evening, as he and Muldoon were sitting in the office.

"For why would I get a dog?" asked Muldoon. "I have mouths enough already to feed widout getting another wan. Dogs are very expinsive animals to kape when it comes to butchers' bills."

"But you ought to have a dog, dad. It isn't safe not to have one when there are so many thieves about."

"Sure, there's no danger from them. Somebody is always up in the house."

"Yes, but a sneak might get in at the back door and those in the front of the house would know nothing about it."

"Well, there's nothing in the back of the house to take, barrin' washin' machines and the fire escape and nobody would take them."

"Of course not, but what's the matter with their going up-stairs and swiping things out of the rooms? You want a dog I tell you."

"No, I don't. Phwat do I hire min for av it isn't to kape a luck out that nothing's tuk? I'll not have a dog."

"Shure, thin, ye're very foolish," put in Mrs. Muldoon, who heard the last of this colloquy. "The boy is right, Terry, as he allus is, and yez have a right to listen to 'im."

"I tell yez I don't need any dog to luck after the place. Mike Growler is homely enough to frighten anny thaves away av they come, but I don't believe they will."

"Maybe I are a reg'lar old Jim Dandy for ugliness," remarked Mr. Growler, who came in as Muldoon made this observation upon his looks, "but I can't be everywhere to onst, and when I'm in de front some snoozer might get in at der back. I ain't got swivel eyes, I hain't, ter look all ways ter onst."

"Oh, you must have a dog, pop," said Roger.

"That settles it," said Mrs. Muldoon, in a decided tone.

"Cert'nly yer must," added Mike. "Ye're a bloomin' ole moss grown idiot if yer don't get one."

"There are many advantages in possessing a competent watch-dog. The most satisfactory guardian of the household extant," sagely remarked Mr. Burns, the poet, as he joined the coterie.

"Phwat do potes know about dogs, annyway?" sneered Muldoon.

"Everything, my dear sir. The faithful dog has been celebrated in song and story from time immemorial. Here is what I say about dogs in my great poem."

"Did old Glory have a dog?" asked Muldoon, irreverently.

"Dat gal didn't need no dog," snorted the honorable Mike. "She was homely enough

to go all over the city without nuthin', she was."

Mr. Burns was not to be choked off in that fashion.

He had cleared his throat, and now he went ahead:

"Oh, the radiant, peerless, beauteous Maiden, Gloriana, she whose charms Just took the confection, otherwise the Cake, this lovely la-la, this daisy Girl, this honey-cooler from Wayback, This giddy gusher from—"

Mr. Burns suddenly paused and stared hard at the manuscript he was reading.

"Somebody has tampered with my poem," he vociferated. "By my veracity, I never wrote those lines!"

"Course yer didn't, yer dizzy, old funeral maker," snickered Nibbsey, who had lately bloomed upon the gathering. "Them's a good sight better'n anything you ever wrote, I take me beans if dey ain't."

"The hand is foreign," muttered Mr. Burns. "I never wrote like that; I have been imposed upon."

"Faith, it's aisy enough to see that yez niver wrote them," laughed Muldoon. "Yez haven't the ganius."

"Dat feller can't write for sour apples, anyhow, boss," put in the bell boy. "Yer never heard de rest o' dat song o' mine, did yer? Well, here she goes."

Nibbsey at once broke into a waltz step and warbled as follows:

"Down where the vi'lets blush and bloom
In der shady, little woody dell,
I met my pretty little Louise, she's a dandy girl,
And I told her—to her my love I did tell;
I see her every Sunday in de evening,
And we're going to get—"

Swish!
Plunk!

A big fat sponge, half full of inky water, caught Nibbsey under the ear that moment. Muldoon was the party who had thrown the missile.

The bell boy ceased his melodious mutterings, wiped his neck on his sleeve and waltzed away, observing to the crowd:

"Youse fellers is jealous o' me, see, an' you don't know what good singin' is. Wait till I come out at Tony Pastor's and den you'll see."

Then his song turned to a whistle and he skipped out, not at all mad, but only a little cautious lest something harder than a sponge might follow.

"Well, then, it's settled that you're going to have a dog, is it?" said Roger, drawing on his gloves and setting his chippie hat at the proper angle upon his head. "All right. I know a man that has a dandy one that he'll sell cheap."

Then that young fellow got into his fur-lined overcoat and faded away before Muldoon could utter a protest.

"Well, I call that cool cheek, be heavens!" he ejaculated, as the door closed upon Roger. "I niver said I wanted a dog. It wor all his own invintion."

Nobody disputed that, but they all understood that a dog would be forthcoming all the same.

Mr. Growler scented a snap, and Dan sus-

pected that Roger was only guying Muldoon, while Mrs. Muldoon was prepared to indorse all that Roger said or did, never guessing but that he was in sober earnest.

Well, the dog came the next day, and was a corker and no mistake.

Nobody knew exactly what breed he was, but he was homely enough to be anything.

He was part bulldog, part mastiff, part something else, and entirely no good.

In the first place he was homely enough to stop a clock, being lop-eared, stump-tailed, fat-chopped, bow-legged and cross-grained, and in the next he had a temper like the evil one himself.

A boy brought the creature in on the end of a chain, put him down in front of the desk and remarked:

"There's yer dog."

With that he dusted, taking good care to shut the door behind him.

The dog made a break, but couldn't get out, and so he set up a howl.

"Wud yez luck at the dog!" muttered Dan. "Sure he's a beauty, av yez have yer eyes shut."

"He's just good-lookin' enough ter be killed, that's wot," remarked Mr. Growler.

"Wow!" observed the mongrel, making a dash at Mike.

The member from Nevada got on top of the desk with great celerity.

Just then Muldoon came down-stairs and saw the animal.

"Who owns the dog?" he demanded in wrath. "Don't yez know I allow no canine beasts in me hotil?"

"Guess he must be yours, Terry," said Edward Geoghegan.

"Sure thin, he's not, and I won't have him. Put him out, wan av yez."

"I'm a sweet ole cruelty-agin-animal crank, I am, an' I shed buckets o' tears when folks steps on a pup's tail," said Mr. Growler from his elevated position, "and I ain't going ter touch der poor little ting."

"Begob thin I'll put him out meself," snorted Muldoon. "Get out av this, ye ugly brute," and the solid man seized an umbrella from the rack and shook it at the pup.

"Wuff!" remarked the brute as he went at Muldoon. The latter had no need for the umbrella and he dropped it.

That umbrella wasn't good for much to begin with, but it was worth less when that dog got through with it.

He tore and bit and shook it about till it had more holes in it than a sieve.

Muldoon did not climb on top of any desks, but he kept out of harm's way just the same.

"Pit him out, somebody, why don't yez?" he asked.

"If I open the dure will yez put him out?" asked Dan.

"I will, be heavens."

Dan was nearer the door than the dog was and he opened it.

"Now thin, git eout," cried Muldoon, advancing in a threatening attitude.

It was no go.

That dog had made up his mind to stay, and he would not be put out.

He growled and showed his teeth, and

looked at Muldoon with the eye that was bad in a way to quail the stoutest heart.

Dan tried coaxing, when he saw that threats would do no good.

"Good doggie—nice doggie," he remarked. "Now thin, doggie, this way—nice feller."

"Won't!" said the dog, or something that sounded very much like it.

Down came Mrs. Dan Muldoon at that juncture.

"Shut that door, you Irish idiot!" she remarked. "Do you want to freeze the house and give us all the influenza and everything else?"

"I will when I put the dog out," answered Dan.

That gentleman happened to come up, and he took the creature down below and put him in the back yard.

Probably because he recognized a fellow being that dog took to the cook and to no one else.

He regarded Muldoon as his deadly enemy, however.

The boss had occasion to go into the yard for something, later in the day, but he didn't get it.

The dog ran him out in no time at all.

Muldoon did not stop to dispute the matter, but got right out.

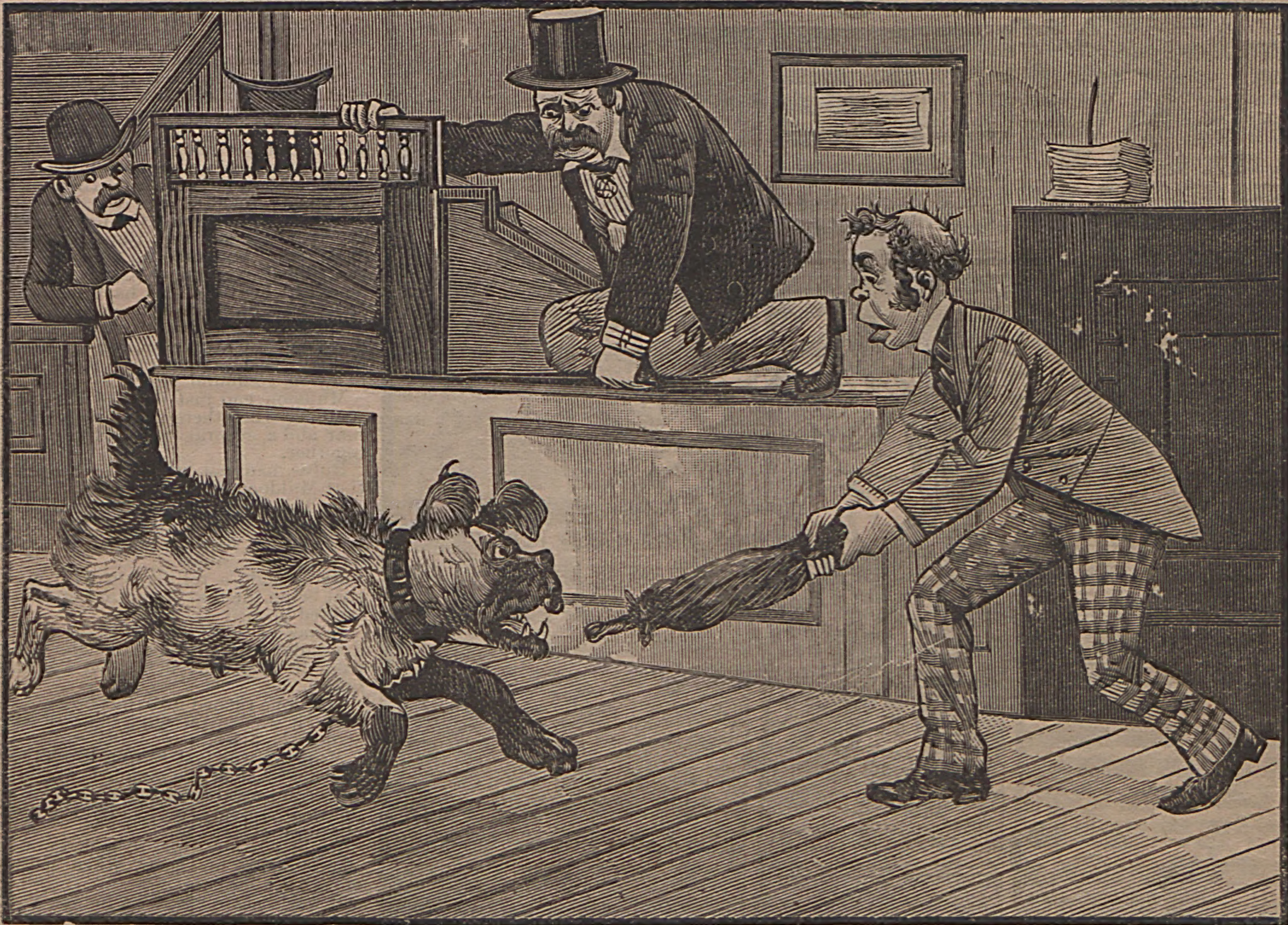
"Sure, it's no wondher ye and the cook are frinds," he muttered, when he reached

torn out and their limbs lacerated more or less by that sweet tempered bruiser of a dog.

Neither did it do any good to hurl boot-jacks, empty bottles or fire shovels at him, for then he only howled the more.

The only thing was to let him howl and tire himself out howling, for to pay attention to him and to try and stop the nuisance only made matters worse.

Some of the boarders complained and threatened to move out if the dog wasn't either killed or silenced, and the neighbors declared, to a man, that they would have Muldoon indicted for maintaining a nuisance if the noises did not cease.



"Begob thin I'll put him out mesilf," snorted Muldoon. "Get out av this, ye ugly brute," and the solid man seized an umbrella from the rack and shook it at the pup.

The lady thought he referred to her own sweet, darling pet.

"I'd just like to see you put my dog out a cold day like this!" she snapped. "Don't you dare to do such a thing, you crack-brained brute!"

Then she came sailing down-stairs with the intention of protecting her dear doggie from those awful men.

When she saw what dog it was her tune changed.

"Oh, what a fright!" she shrieked. "Get out, you brute!"

She went at that purp as if she meant to annihilate him.

She did not do it.

If the creature had had an eye for beauty he might have been terrified at her ugliness and have dusted on his own account, but he hadn't.

Instead of dusting he made a rush at Mrs. Dan, grabbed the fringe of her petticoat and gave it a lively old shake.

Mrs. Dan escaped minus several yards of trimming, but with an increase of temper. Nobody tried to put the dog out after that.

The question still remained, however, as to what was to be done with him.

It was settled by Rufus.

the house. "It's the same kind av a temper yez have, the both av yez."

And still the question remained unanswered, what disposition should be made of the dog?

"Let Roger have him for a pet," suggested Muldoon. "It wor him that sint him here, and now let him take care av him."

"He ought to make a foine watch dog," put in Dan. "Sure, he won't let anny wan go within a mile av him."

"Wait till summer comes," said Mr. Burns, "and turn him over to the dog catchers."

"I'll give yez a dollar now av yez will take him to the pound or the river, I don't care which," said Muldoon.

Mr. Burns did not accept the offer. He would have recited a selection from his great poem, however, but Muldoon choked him off.

The animal gave the people in the hotel other reasons for hating him than his cranky disposition, however.

At night he howled and poured out clamorous complaints to the moon, which could be heard all over the neighborhood.

Nobody cared to go down and bid him stop, for fear of having their trousers seats

Then Muldoon went to Wash, the darkey porter, and said:

"Luck here, George Washington Tippecanoe Jefferson, or phwat iver yer name is, do yez go and interview that colored frind of yours in the culinary department and prevail upon him, av yez can, to kape that dog quiet or kill him. I can't shtand the n'ise."

"A-right, boss, I fix de ting up wif Rufus, but mebbly it'll cos' me suffin'. Dat nigger am bery set in him way an' yo' can't do nuffin' wif him, 'less yo' gib him a 'sideration ob some kin' or 'noder."

This was a taradiddle, for Wash could easily persuade Rufus to take the dog in doors of a night, but that porter was on the make, and would not do anything without a tip if he could avoid it.

"Here's a dollar, thin," said Muldoon, "and for heaven's sake, kape that bruiser quite. I don't want to lose all me boorders on account av a misfit mongrel dog like that, be heavens."

After that the dog ceased to howl of a night, but Muldoon was not through with him by any means.

It was about this time that the cook, Rufus Jackson, managed to get square on Muldoon for the recent snubbing he had

received at the latter's hands upon the occasion of the scare by the mock Indian.

Terrence had made some remark derogatory to Rufus' character, when the cook was being hustled back to the kitchen in all his war paint, and the coon had told his employer to look out for himself. Now came the time when Muldoon had to do it in good earnest.

and worse," he growled, as he struck his pet gold-filled molar upon a bit of bone in a veal croquette. "The whole jaw is broke aff me wid that feller's carelessness."

"Ah, go an, wot's eatin' yer?" sniffed Mr. Growler. "Dat's nuthin'!"

"Nothing, is it?" muttered Muldoon. "Do yez call it nothing to smash yer toot"

It was another bone, and a big one, and Muldoon was fighting mad.

"I'll go and interview that cook, be the powers, so I will," he muttered, jumping up, his napkin hanging from his collar button, and blood in his eye.

He rushed to the speaking tube at the other end of the room and blew a blast on it that made Rufus down below jump two feet.

"Wull, what yo' want up dere?" asked that angry cook, talking to the tube.

"Come up here, ye black misfit av a hash house grub slinger," returned Muldoon, "an' see phwat I want! Sure, yez don't know the forst rudiments av the culinary art, begorrah."

"Wha' dat yo' say, yo' big stuff?" asked Rufus. "Don' yo' talk dat a way to me, sah, 'case I won' hab it."

"Come up here, I tell yez, and look at the stuff yez call food. It's not fit for pigs, begob, and I want no more av it. Yez air no good, and the sooner yez sind in yer resignation the better for ye, ye off-colored hippopotamus."

"Wha' dat yo' say?" and the cook's voice had a touch of rage in it.

"Don't stand there axin' fool queshins, ye black and tan ijut," snapped Muldoon; "but come up here as I bid yez. I'll let yez know who runs this house, be heavens. I'll have no impidence from anny wan, much less from a nagur, and I want yez to understand it wanst for all, ye pigeon-breasted, bandy-legged, squint-eyed son av a babboon, confound yez!"

Muldoon had just finished this fine sentence when there was a rush and a roar and a general cylonic feeling altogether.

Rufus had not waited to hear all that Muldoon was saying.

He had heard enough to transform him into a wild, raging, wrath-filled, gore-seeking maniac, and up he came on vengeance intent.

He brought a rolling pin with him, that being the first thing that his hand lighted upon.

It was an overgrown affair, however, a regular club, in fact, and one welt from it would have brained a stone image.

When he rushed into that breakfast-room, it was as though a blizzard had struck the place.

Muldoon was just taking breath for another blast at the man below, when he became aware of a sudden low barometrical pressure, portending the near approach of a storm.

He had barely time to look up and then take to his heels, when Rufus burst upon him.

It was a narro "squeak, for one blow of that big rolling pin on the noddle would have given Muldoon a headache for a week.

"How dare yo' talk to a 'spectable col'd man like o' dat, yo' big, lazy, I'ish loafah, yo'?" demanded Rufus, giving chase.

Muldoon did not stop to argue the case.

Everybody had left the table and the room was vacant.

He dusted out of that in a jiffy and made for the hall.

After him came Rufus so close that capture seemed imminent.

At the end of the hall was a window left temporarily open, although it was a cold day outside.

Beyond the window was the fire escape leading to the back yard.

Towards this Muldoon now raced, Rufus in hot pursuit.

PART XVI.

MULDOON reached the window in good time, sprang out and got on the fire escape.

Down he went, thinking that now he was safe enough.

Alas for the uncertainty of human aspirations!

He was not a bit better off than before. On the contrary, he had dodged one dan



There sat Muldoon on one round of the fire-escape, hanging onto the sides, between two dangers, the cook above and dog below.

He had forgotten all about the circumstance, when one noontime he had occasion to find fault with the cooking as exploited by Rufus.

The cook had been imbibing, and consequently the lunch that he served up that day was rocky in the extreme.

Mrs. Muldoon was out shopping with Mary Ann, and so knew nothing about it, and Mrs. Dan, her husband, the Honorable Mike and Edward Geoghegan were quite well satisfied with the grub, being easily suited in that respect.

Muldoon was not feeling very well, anyhow, and the best would not have tasted any too good to him.

"Be heavens, that cook is getting worse

on a bone, whin there oughtn't to be anny av thim in the croquets, begob?"

"Ah, you're too gay," snorted Mike. "De grub is good enough for anybody."

"It may be good enough for ye, what has no stoyle about ye," answered Muldoon, with considerable acidity, "but it aren't good enough for me, I can tell yez."

"I'm a roarin' old millionaire, and der gold dust just falls off'n me when I walk, and yer kin pick up diamonds off der floor when I hops around any way lively, but I ain't skittish about any grub, I ain't, and I say it's good enough fur any one. See?"

"Ah, go an, yez make me—Ow, wow! Oh, be heavens, phwat have I shtruck?"

ger to run plump upon another and a worse one.

At the foot of the fire escape was that dog.

You remember that fat-muzzled, blear-eyed, ugly-looking mongrel, of course?

Well, there he was, at the foot of the ladder, waiting to take a bite out of Muldoon's leg, or lunch upon any other part of his anatomy that came most handy.

Above was Rufus, the cook, with a big rolling pin, ready to play a tune on Muldoon's skull with it.

Below was the dog, anxious to chew him in small pieces.

That brute had never liked Muldoon from the start, considering him his sworn enemy from the very beginning.

Moreover, Rufus was the dog's friend and confidant, and the latter would do whatever the cook told him.

Rufus did not have two opinions about going down that fire-escape.

It was too slippery, and besides, the weather outside was much too cold to suit his tropical proclivities.

If he did not go down, however, he could keep Muldoon from coming up.

"Take him, Towse!" he remarked.

"Wow!" answered the dog.

There sat Muldoon on one round of the fire-escape, hanging onto the sides, between two dangers, the cook above and dog below.

A round of the fire-escape was better than a round with either the cook or the dog.

"This is a foine how-do-you-do, be heavens!" he muttered.

He was in embroidered slippers, a smoking jacket and checked trousers, no hat on his head, and a napkin hanging from his collar.

It was certainly not a costume in which to brave the wintry winds.

Nor was his seat the most comfortable or agreeable one upon which to pass the weary moments.

A bar of iron is never the best place to sit on, but when it is covered with ice, and has been submitted to a zero temperature for several days, it is anything but a bed of roses.

"Sure I can't stay here," muttered Muldoon, getting a move on him.

That dog was on the watch, and as soon as Muldoon took a step, he flew to the foot of the iron ladder and barked furiously.

"I don't think I want to go that way," observed Muldoon. "Perhaps I might vinture up."

Then he remembered the cook, whom he could not see, but who must be waiting for him all the same.

As a matter of fact, Rufus had gone away, after closing and locking the window of the hall.

He knew that if he were discovered upstairs, an investigation would follow, he would have to skip, and Muldoon would be liberated.

He went away and returned to the kitchen, where he could direct the movements of the dog without being interfered with.

"Oh, murder! I forgot the cook!" gasped Muldoon. "The bloodthirsty vilyan is up there, beyant, waitin' to pulverize me brains wid the rollin' pin, be heavens!"

That would not do, of course.

There he sat therefore, between two dangers, wondering which it was best to brave. Presently he thought of a way out of his troubles.

"Sure, there's other windys I can get in," he cried, joyfully. "That obstreperous blackguard can't stand a cintury at thim all. Phy didn't I think av that before?"

Indeed, there was a window not far above his head.

It was closed, but of course he could open it, and then he was safe.

He made a sudden movement to get off of his strange perch.

There was an impediment in the way of doing this.

In fact he was stuck fast to the ladder, his trousers having frozen to the cold iron.

It took considerable of an effort to free himself, but those custom-made unmentionables suffered by it.

Six square inches of the same remained upon the round of the ladder.

"Oh, glory, I've torn me pants!" ejacu-

lated Muldoon, as the cold, cruel wind frisked about his legs.

However, that was something that might be remedied.

Up the ladder he skipped, the dog barking furiously the while.

He reached the window, and discovered to his joy that the catch was not in place.

It would be but a moment's work to shove up the sash now.

Would it, indeed?

Muldoon tried it, but without success.

In short the window was frozen solid.

Muldoon could not budge it half an inch.

"Begorry, there's more than wan way av killing a cat av it do have nine loives," he ejaculated.

Then he kicked vigorously at the window pane.

The toe of an embroidered slipper is not much of use as a window breaker, however.

All Muldoon did was to contuse his toes and do no damage to the glass.

Something must be done, however, and so he began to yell for help at the top of his voice.

Nobody heard him, and the situation was getting more desperate.

He was shivering with the cold, an icicle hung at the end of his nose, his mustache and side sluggers were covered with frost, and his teeth played a regular tune as they clashed together.

"Wor iver a mon in such a ploight?" he wailed. "Faix, I'll be frozen stiff if I remain here wan moment longer."

Then he bethought himself of another plan.

Off came his slippers, and taking the toes in his hand, he banged on the glass with the heels.

This time it cracked and a small piece fell out.

Then he banged away harder and made a hole as big as his two hands.

He lost his grip on the slippers, however, and they fell inside the house.

Then he was in a fix indeed.

The hole was not half big enough to get in at, and he did not dare to use his hands to make it bigger.

"Begob, that's the toughest glass I iver see," he muttered in disgust.

Finally he got as close to the window as he could, doubled his arm and banged his elbow against the glass.

This time he made a hole as big as his body, but he nearly fell through the glass in the bargain.

And then, along that hallway, came Nibbsey.

"Hallo, there! Open the windy!" shouted Muldoon.

"Dat you, boss?" asked the redheaded bell-boy, coming up. "What yer doin' out dere?"

"Sittin' here for me own amusement, av coorse," snapped Muldoon. "Phwat do yez suppose I do be doin'?"

"Well, I take me oat!" and Nibbsey snorted. "Oh, Gee! but ain't dat a snap? Dat's de best one yet!"

Then that youth let himself loose, and fairly shook with mirth.

"Hush yer n'ise, ye Darwinian idjit!" cried Muldoon, "and throw up the windy, or break it, or do something. I'm most perished wid the cowl!"

"I say, boss, just lemme sing yer dat new song and dance o' mine, won't yer?" asked Nibbsey, persuasively.

"Let me in, and yez can sing the whole av it, av it takes yez from neow to Pathrick's day, be heavens."

Nibbsey had to laugh a bit more, however, before he could do anything, and he raised one of those fairy feet of his and knocked that glass into a cocked hat.

"Go ordher me a hot limonade with a club in it," said Muldoon, when he tumbled in, "and brnig it to me room, but for heaven's sake don't say anything to the byes about this, or I'll discharge yez widout a charachter, and kape back a year's wages besoides."

"Oh, Gee! dat's der best yet!" giggled the boy, as he hurried away, the boss having already made himself scarce.

Muldoon went to his room, drew a big easy chair up in front of the fire, hauled out a fur rug, three blankets and a pillow, wrapped himself up in them and proceeded to make himself comfortable.

The news of his escapade, his fire escapade, in fact, got around, however, in spite of his caution to Nibbsey.

Rufus had told Wash, the porter gave it to Frills, the head waiter confided it to Roger, the son of his mother, communicated it to Dan, Muldoon's brother imparted the information to Mike, the Nevada lily retailed the news to Mr. Burns, the poet rehearsed the tale of woe to Edward Geoghegan, the walking delegate reported the case to Major Buster, the old war horse made a general order of the whole business, and the entire household presently knew all about it.

Nibbsey was the only one that said nothing about it, but Muldoon suspected him all the same.

That good-natured imp with the single suspender and the sunny locks surveyed Muldoon as he sipped his hot stuff, and then remarked:

"You're a honeycooler, boss, you are, and no error. Oh, gee! if dat ain't rich!"

"Hould yer whist, ye red-headed son av a pirate!" said Muldoon, taking a gulp of red-hot grog. "Yez must show more rayspict to yez supariors. Av I wasn't rooted to me chair I'd trow yez out av the windy."

"Get onto dis, boss," chuckled Nibbsey, doing a few dizzy steps.

"Oh, my, she was so fine and neat,

Tinky-ting, bing-bing,

Wid her putty face and her little feet,

Plunk-plunk, skimmer-dink.

She's my darling, she's my daisy, my little pet, And I met her in de evenin' when de roses were in bloom,

And when de spring time comes, and de birds—"

Thump!

That was a knock on the door and Nibbsey paused:

"Come in!" cried Muldoon, without thinking.

Then he did think and whispered to Nibbsey:

"Lock the dure, ye imp av mischief, and don't let in a sowl."

Too late!

The door opened and in walked the gang. They were all there, every man Jack of them.

They filed in one after another until the room was full.

There was Mike and Dan and Burns to start with it.

Then came Edward Geoghegan, Frills, Wash and Major Buster.

After them entered Mulcahey and the alderman, who had dropped in to see Muldoon quite by accident, and had brought Budweiser with him.

Finally in walked Roger and half of the Muldoon Base Ball Club, the latter having come to persuade their captain to take them on a trip to California.

The only man in all the house that did not come up was Rufus.

The gang opened on Muldoon at once:

"Well, if you ain't a corker!"

"How's fire escape stock, Mul?"

"Treed be a cook and a dog! Oh, my, oh, my!"

"You're a dandy hotel keeper, you are!"

"I vas insured your life sheap dis verry minute, Muldoon, und off you die, your wife gets den tousand dollars. Puy a shoot off glodes off me und I give a bolicy mit it."

That was Ikey Stein, second baseman of the ball club.

"I reckod you ged a code id your head just like bide, dow, Buldood."

That was Dan Jones, the catarrhal short stop of the team.

"I'm a Jim dandy from Whirlwind Gulch and I've seen some funny things in my time, but you just clean out der hull shop."

That was Mr. Growler of course.

"By my scars and broken bones, sir, but you are a specimen of able-bodied chump to wonder at, sir, you are indeed."

That was the old battle-scarred, or scared veteran, Major Buster, sir, of the 'Steenth So'th Ca'lina rig'ment, sir, who made that last observation.

Then all the gang let itself out.

They yelled and shrieked and howled.

They giggled and guffawed and grinned.

They shook their sides and cackled.

They slapped their legs and exploded.

Then they cheered and roared.

Afterwards they did some more laughing.

Finally they made more remarks:

"Will yer get onto it, anyhow?"

"It blew in wid the blizzard."

"Vell, off dot vash't gread!"

"Thad's the fuddiest thi'g I ever seed."

"Shtick a pin in it and see it bust."

"Drop in a penny and hear it talk."

"Order up a basket, Mul."

"You can't escape it, old man."

"Vell, I should sneeze my ear off once."

"Oh, mah goodness, I really shall expiah."

"How's the cook?"

"Oh, he's all right."

"And how's Muldoon?"

"M-M-ah! Chestnuts. Straw hats! Called in!"

"Yez are making yerselves very merry, aren't ye, byes?" asked Muldoon, when the hubbub had somewhat subsided. "To what may I attribute the cause av yer exceeding hilarity? I wud be pleased to be enlighbened an the subject."

Oh, he was very innocent, he was.

However, he could not bluff that gang for the price of chewing gum.

"Dat's all right, Mul, old fell," laughed Mr. Growler. "Maybe ye don't think I know all about that fire-escape business."

"Then, be heavens, Nibbsey must have tould ye, and the desaiver promussed he wudn't say a worrud."

"Oh, boss, I take me oat' I never did, so help me New Year's!" gasped Nibbsey.

He hadn't said a word, for a fact.

"Ye're a liar," snapped Muldoon, "and yez can pack up and get out."

"Ah, keep yer shirt on, Mul," snorted Mike. "It wasn't der boy wot give der ting away. I'm a swift and sure vigilante, I am, and I fetches folks up standin', I do, but I ain't goin' ter see a feller suffer fur wot he ain't done, I ain't, yer can bet yer socks on it."

"And phwat ividence have yez to offer that the bye didn't donate the snap to the whole house?"

"Ah, go on, ye old stuff!" snorted the Nevada lily. "Wasn't I in der room when der cook chased yer out? 'Course I was, and after dat he told Wash, and den it got all around."

"Didn't I tell yer I never said a word, boss?" cried the triumphantly-vindicated Nibbsey.

"Thin I beg yer pardon," said Muldoon, "and that's all there is to it."

"Say, boss," cried Redhead, "let me do dat song and dance o' mine, and den pass round der hat, won't yer? Ah, go on, I kin make a bully stake."

"Do it," laughed Muldoon. "I know av no better way av clearin' the room, widout Hippocrates Burns, the insane pote, gives wan av his own selections."

"You do not pay a proper tribute to the genius which inspired my great work, Muldoon," answered Mr. Burns, the poet. "It is a labor of love, a work of the soul, the effusion of a spirit soaring high in the empyrean of the imagination, and you cannot fathom its depths. Listen to this soul-stirring passage:

"Around, about, encompassing, surrounding,
Filling all corners of that mystic place
Abyssmal, black and uncanny and with
Darkness covered, swarmed like bees,
The dreadful crew, while anon, breathless
Like to a man choked with sulphurous
Flames, swept over all a terror horrid,
A dread nameless yet tangible, a horror
Palpable but defying—"

"Ah, go on, ye imitation Milton!" cried Muldoon. "Yez have cleared the room and now yez can clear out yerself."

Muldoon was quite right in his estimation of the scattering powers of Mr. Burns' verses.

Not one member of the gang remained in the room.

"I am not appreciated. I am the poet of the future," remarked Mr. Burns, tragically.

"Yis, ye are, and a future so far remote, be heavens, that the mind av man is paralyzed whin it tries to fix the date av it."

"Aha, I waste time in bandying words with so unappreciative a listener," muttered the poet; "but never mind, my time will come."

"It's come already, Hippocrates," laugh-

ed Muldoon. "Yez have exceeded yer limit, so get out and lave me in peace."

Mr. Burns faded away, closing the door behind him, and Muldoon was left alone.

"Thank goodness for thot!" he muttered, finishing his drink. "A few more minyutes and the gang wud have finished me. I niver tho't I wud be so indebted to Burns, but I am indeed. That pome av his wor the only thing that saved me."

Roger came in later on and brought his dad some more hot stuff and a prime cigar.

"Do yez know, Roger," said Muldoon, as he sat puffing at the fragrant weed, "that I'm glad that this wor none av yere snaps? Av it had been, yez wud have had no home be to-morry, for I wud have cast ye adhrift an the cowl'd crool worruld widout aven a pack av cigarettes to comfort yez."

"No, it didn't have my trade mark on it, pop," rejoined the young scamp, "but it's a pretty good snap for all that."

"Pretty good, ye young harlequin!" cried Muldoon. "Troth, av I wor laid out sthiff an cowl'd in me sarcophagus, yez wud call that putty good too, I suppose?"

"Oh, no, pop, you're too tough to kill so easily as that. You've had many a little game of freeze-out before now, I know, and have stood them like a man."

"Be heavens, I have, and av yez have nothing better to do, I'll play yez a game av forthy-foives now, so I will."

"Make it poker, pop, and I'll go you."

"Sure, annything'll do me, and I'll bate yez at all av thim. Do yez moind the toime I woon forty thousand dollars from thim thrain robbers out West?"

"Yes, pop, but you won't win forty cents from me."

Then Roger drew a table in front of his dad's chair, procured a pack of cards, got some chips, and proceeded.

Muldoon won several pots, and finally a gleam of satisfaction shot across his rosy countenance.

"Give me two cards," he remarked as he laid two paste-boards on the table.

"There they are, pop."

"And don't yez want anny yerself?" for Roger had taken none.

"Nope."

"Faix, yez think yez have a foine hand, I suppose?"

"I ain't saying anything, pop."

"Then the pot is mine."

"Not till you win it, pop."

"Are yez stayin' in, Roger?"

"Sure."

"What do yez bet?"

"It's your say first."

"There's tin blue wans an it."

"Go you ten better, dad."

"Begorry, I'll put on all me pile."

"There's mine to match it, and it's bigger than yours."

"Thin I'll call yez."

"Put up the chips, dad."

"Sure, yez knows I have none."

"Well, money talks, dad."

"How much does it take to call yez?"

"Oh, about ten dollars usually."

"Ye're a robber. I'll not give it."

"Then the pot is mine."

"Howld on! What have yez got?"

"Are you paying to see it?"

"I'll bet yez five dollars I have a better hand than ye."

"I'll go you, pop."

"Show yer fisht."

"No, you made the bet."

"Well, thin. Can yez bate that," and Muldoon laid down four aces and a king.

"Yes, easy."

"Go an, yez can't."

"Yes, I can."

"Thin show me."

Roger laid down his hand.

It contained five aces.

"The money is yours," said Muldoon in disgust, "but don't let me catch yez workin' anny more hoodooed cairds on me, or I'll break yer jaw."

PART XVII.

ROGER did not take the five dollars that he had won from Muldoon on that hand of five aces, but the laugh was on the Solid Man just the same.

The young fellow presently put up another job on his dad, after the latter was

able to get about, that picnic on the fire-escape having given him a dandy cold.

The manner in which the snap was worked will now be narrated.

One afternoon a man came to the hotel and inquired for Muldoon.

When the latter appeared, the man said to him effusively:

"Troth, ye're luckin' well, Terry, as well as iver I saw ye in me life. Things must be goin' foine wid ye, but thin ye're a man that wud always make his mark."

"Thin ye're wrong, be heavens, for I can write me name in full as good as anny mon. It's many a long year since I had to make me mark."

"Oh, well, sure I'd know yez had Irish blood in yez be that remark. Ye always was a clever hand at a joke, so ye wor, Terry."

"Yez seem to be mighty familiar, whoever ye are," returned Muldoon, "but the particular receptacle in me mimory in which yez have a place is locked, and I haven't the kay. Who are yez, anyhow?"

"Ye don't know me?"

"I do not, faix."

"Think again."

"Go an, I have no time for thinkin'. Who are ye, wanst for all?"

"Don't yez remember me, yer ould neighbor down in Mulberry street?"

"No, I do not."

"Why, I'm Reilly, don't ye know?"

"Oh, ye're Reilly, eh? Well, I don't know yez. Phwat's this anyhow, a bunco game, or phwat?"

"No, it's not. I'm Peter Reilly, what—"

"Ates fish and catches eels, as we used to say in the books at school? So ye're him, are yez?"

"No, no, man. I'm a cobbler, and it's many's the pair of boots I've minded for ye. Sure ye must remember Reilly av the Bend."

"Well, we'll say I do to save discussion. Phwat can I do for yez? I'm out av politics."

"Sure it's not politics at all that brings me up here. It's a christenin' I'm goin' to invite yez to."

"And phwat wud I be goin' to a christenin' in Mulberry Bind for? Don't you know that it's an opy night and that Mrs. M. and meself must go an' sit in our box along wid the McAllisters and the Asthurs and Vanderbilts and Gin'ral Sherman and Bob Ingersoll and the rest av the nobbs?"

"There's no opera to-night, pop, it's Thursday," put in Roger.

"Oho, so it is. I thought it wor Wednesday, so I did," muttered Muldoon, giving his jolly son a reproachful look.

"Well, if it wor not, I know ye'd come," said Reilly. "It's twins, so it is, and ye'd niver guess the names av the darlints."

"Then yez may as well tell me thim."

"Wan is to be called Terrence Muldoon Reilly and the other—Oho, yez can asily guess the other."

"Faix I cannot," returned Muldoon, who began to show more interest than before.

"Well, thin, it's a girrul. Now, thin, can yez tell the name?"

"Faix, I'm not a witch or Professor Hermann, and I cannot."

"Well, thin, it's Bedakia Ann Muldoon Reilly."

Muldoon looked pleased, and felt that a great honor had been done him.

He was chuck full of human nature, after all, and his icy hauteur was no proof against this little compliment.

"Faix, I know ye'll come now," said Reilly. "The Bend'll be proud to welcome one of its shining lights, so it will."

"I don't raymber that I have anny engagement for the night," said Muldoon, stroking his chin. "At phwat hour do the ceremonies eventuate?"

"At nine o'clock; but the sooner ye get there the better time ye'll have."

"At phwat number will I shtop me car'ge?" asked Muldoon, beginning to put on lugs.

"Faix, ye know the place well enough. It's nixt to Casey's woine imporium. Ye'll be there prompt?"

"Yis," said Muldoon, more delighted than he cared to show.

"The boys will be glad to see yez, and it'll be a great honor to the twins, so it

will. Good-bye, Terry, don't forget to be airy."

"Have something before ye go," said Muldoon. "Name yer tippie and it shall be brought."

Reilly had several somethings before he went, and Muldoon felt as proud as a girl with her first beau.

He could think of nothing else but the christening all the afternoon, and strutted around as proud as a peacock.

"Guess it's a good time ter strike de boss for more wages," thought Nibsey. "I ain't seen him feeling so good in six weeks."

"Yer must've won a prize in der lottery, Mul, old sport," remarked the Honorable Mike. "I ain't saw yer look so gay in a long time."

"No, I have not, but it's me natherally jovial disposition that shows an me, Mike."

"Ah, go 'way—it's suthin' else. I'm a red-headed old astrologer, I am, with a green velvet duster on, and I can tell."

"Well, there is something not quite in the usual line goin' an this avenin', and I'll tell yez all about it. I'm to stand for two twins, and they're named after me."

"Not both o' them, Mul?"

"No, wan is for me woife; it's a bye and a girrl."

"Oho, yer goin' to a christening, hey? Well, you and me is reg'lar old Siamese twins, we are, and where you go, I've gotter go. I'm goin' ter take in der show, pardner, see?"

"Faix, there's nothing to hinder," returned Muldoon.

"We'll take der whole gang down," continued Mike. "There ain't nuthin' mean about us. Yer a-going to set up der supper, I s'pose? Yer'll be a nice old god father if yer don't."

"Yis, I think I could sind down some refreshments, both solid and fluid. No doubt they'll be acceptable."

"Dat's der way ter talk, Mul, old she-root," said Mike. "Give der kids a good send-off when yer can. It ain't often yer gets der chance."

"Be heavens, it's not ivery man's choild that I lind me name to, Mr. Growler, and don't yez forgit it," said Muldoon, with dignity. "It may not be often, but when it do happen, it's an occasion to be proud av, me cyclonic frind from the wild and woolly West."

Mr. Growler had no more to say after that, Muldoon having most effectually corked him up.

When evening came, Mrs. Muldoon had a headache, and had to decline the honor of going to the christening.

Muldoon wanted to go in a sleigh, but Roger persuaded him not to do so, considering that the Honorable Mike, Mr. Burns, Mr. Edward Geoghegan and Dan desired to accompany him.

Instead, therefore, Muldoon went down town by the elevated railroad, getting off at Chatham Square.

When they reached Mulberry street, Muldoon looked around, and asked Roger: "Do yez know the place, me bye? I'm blamed av I do."

"We'll find it in a minute, pop," said the young fellow.

"Look fur Casey's, and yer'll find it," suggested Mr. Growler. "You orter find it, Mul, 'cause yer have a good scent fur saloons, you have. You're a regular old bloodhound for catchin' onter them places."

"No more than yersilf, Mr. Growler," retorted Muldoon. "Av I don't falsify the case, it wor in a dhrinkin' parlor that I forst mit yez, me breezy mimber av the legislachure."

Roger had gone ahead a little, and now, as the rest of the party came up, they found him in conversation with some one.

"This is the place, pop," he said. "Second flat, in front. The company is assembled, waiting for you."

"Come on, byes," said Muldoon. "It's best for us to kape together. Sometimes the hilarity av these affairs do divilope into a ruction, and then it's betther to have yer own gang around yez."

On the first landing up, the party was met by a big coon in a blue coat and brass buttons, very loud trousers, and a huge button-hole bouquet.

"Am yo' come to der christnin', ge'men?" he asked, effusively.

"Yis, Reilly's twins. Me name is Muldoon," answered the Solid Man. "I have a little prisint fur the jools."

"Da's a'right, ge'men. Right in yer. Dis am Mistah Reilly's 'pahments. Step right in, ge'men. We'se glad ter see youse."

In went the party, finding themselves in a moderately-sized room, already quite comfortably filled.

There was a good sprinkling of coons in the place, but there were as many, if not more, white people, but Muldoon, knowing the cosmopolitan character of the street, did not wonder at this.

He would not have been surprised, indeed, if he had seen Chinese, Italians, Jews and Dutchmen mixed in with the crowd of Irish and Africans.

The girl in the red dress was there several times, as well as the youth with the high collar, dirty finger-nails and general air of toughness, these being interspersed with old grannies in big caps, high-toned Micks in double-breasted frock coats and young fellows in checked jumpers.

Gradually more and more coons entered the place, until Muldoon could not help noticing that there was more of them than of anything else.

"I can't understand phwat all the nagurs can be doin' here," he presently whispered to Mr. Growler.

"Ah, dat's a scheme of Reilly's to collar der African vote, don't yer understand?"

"It might be av it wor near election toime, but that do be a long way aff yet."

Before Muldoon could say any more than this there was a commotion at the end of the room nearest him.

Folding doors were thrown open and a crib, covered all over with white mosquito netting, was wheeled into the room.

"Dis way, Mistah Muldoon," said the coon who had introduced our party to the place. "Heah am dose blessed lilly angel kids, uf yo' wanter see 'um."

Muldoon pressed forward, the crowd giving way for him, and the white draperies were thrown aside.

"Dere, sah! Did youse eber see any puttier chillen dan dem, sah? Dey does yo' honah, sah."

Muldoon stood riveted to the floor in horror, his mouth open, his eyes staring, and his high hat nearly lifted from his head by his bristling locks.

The little coons were sitting in that cradle, yelling like all possessed.

They were the blackest pickanninies you ever saw, and there was was not the slightest doubt as to their parentage on both sides being of full African origin.

"Nagurs, be heavens!" gasped Muldoon at length. "Take me out! I'll not give the honored names av Terrence and Bedalia Muldoon to any such monkey brats as them!"

There was a commotion in the place in a twinkling.

The whites guffawed and giggled, but the coons uttered angry exclamations, and the glint of razors could be seen.

"Don' yo' dar' insult dem lilly angel chillens, yo' big Irish loafah, sah," muttered a big coon, stepping forward. "I don' know who eber axed yo' yer anyhow. I didn' know dat. Youse Mulb'y street toughs am too fresh, anyhow, in fo'cin' yo'se'fes inter decent company, yo' is."

"Ye're a loiar, be heavens!" cried Muldoon, angrily. "I'm no Mulberry street tough, and I kem here by invitation, but av I'd known it wor a nagur christenin' that I wor attending and presintin' wid free lunch, beer and cigars, I'd niver hov stud feet in the dirthy ould place, be heavens."

Muldoon's indignation was running away with his senses apparently.

If he had been less mad, however, he would not have been safe, for then those coons would have just carved him up with their national weapons.

His anger made him appear dangerous, however, and the coons hesitated to tackle him.

The Honorable Mike Growler, gathering fictitious courage from seeing Muldoon so brave and defiant, pushed out his big mustache, cocked his high dicer down over one eye, put on a bad-man-from-Cohoes look and remarked:

"I'm der Hon'ble Mike Growler, I am, der lily of Nevada, and dere can't any niggers stand der richness of my perfoom, see, and when I shoots out my fist, suthin's gotter go down."

Mr. Burns, the poet, Edward Geoghegan and Dan Muldoon all rallied to the side of their friend and leader and when Mr. Burns made a suggestive movement with his right hand towards his hip pocket, the crowd of angry coons fell back.

Razors were at a big discount when revolvers were drawn, and the coons knew this too well.

It was not the hilarious 'revolver which Mr. Burns was going to produce, however.

It was simply one canto of his great epic poem, narrating the misfortunes of the peerless Gloriana, which he was about to draw.

There was one particular passage in it which fitted this occasion to a hair, and Hippocrates wanted to read it.

He did not have time, however, for something else happened.

The Honorable Mike and Edward Geoghegan grabbed Muldoon, while Dan seized Burns, and then, while the high colored young gents came between the coons and the hotel party, the latter skipped out.

There was a pretty lively time after that, but Muldoon and his crowd were not in it.

When Muldoon reached the street he met Roger, who said hastily:

"Say, pop, I made a mistake. It wasn't Riley the coon that we wanted, but Reilly, the Irish cobbler. His place is further down the street. Come on, we'll be just in time."

"No, be heavens, I'll not take in anny more christinin's to-night," averred Muldoon in positive tones. "I've already escaped wid me life from wan, an' I'm not goin' to timpt the fates be goin' to another."

"Ah, come on," laughed Roger. "It'll be safe enough. Lightning never strikes twice in the same place."

"No, and it's not necessary. Wan shtroke is effectual, and I niver h'ard that two wor required to knock a man out."

"Come on, Terry," said Dan, "let's take in the Reilly affair."

"I'll not do it," said Muldoon. "In fact, I believe that this is the only christinin' in the street, and that the hull thing was a job put up on me be young Roger and that flannel mouth who called on me the day."

"Oh, no, pop, not at all," laughed Roger. "Reilly's twins are further down the street, but I stumbled on the coon Riley by mistake."

This was partly true, and partly not, but Muldoon would not believe any of it.

There were two Reillys in the street, and one was a coon and his christening came off at the same time as the other, but Roger had purposely sent his father into the coon flat.

The mistake had been that the coon had got the stuff intended for the Irishman, and Peter had found this out when it was too late.

Muldoon would not take any stock in Roger's story and declared that he was going home.

Roger, realizing that there might be trouble if his father went to the Irish affair after having attended the coon celebration, did not urge him, and he and Muldoon and Dan went up-town.

Mike Growler, Mr. Burns and the walking delegate took in the christening, however, and were sorry that they had done so, later on.

They came into the hotel somewhere about midnight, looking like three tramps.

Mr. Growler had a black eye and a smashed dicer, Edward Geoghegan's face looked like a map of the hill country, there were so many bumps on it, and Mr. Burns, the poet, was without hat or coat, had been used as a mop to scrub up the floor and a nose as big as two ordinary ones.

Dan was at the desk when those dizzy celebrators came in.

"For goodness' sake, where have yez t'ree jays been?" asked Dan.

"Shelebratin' forsh o' July an' Washin'-t'n's birshday," remarked the Nevada statesman.

"Yis, and Patrick's Day and Decoration Day besides, I'm thinking," said Dan, with a chuckle.

"This weary world is but a vale of tears," asserted Mr. Burns, "and in the midst of roses there are always thorns. Let me read you a selection from my great poem."

"It's not safe, Hippocrates," said Edward Geoghegan. "Yer tried it at the christening, and look at yerself now, to say nothing of us."

"Well, maybe yez'll take a fool's advice afther this," chuckled Dan. "We tould yez not to go, but yez would."

"Thash a' right," muttered Mr. Growler. "Had a good time, we did, till dat ole poetry book opened up, and den der hull crowd went for us like a pack o' wolves."

"It wor all Terry's fault for promisin' to go and then givin' the feed to the coons,

"Ter stand up in front of a second-hand cloding store to keep people from goin' in."

Mr. Growler tried to swipe the bold and brassy bell-boy, but he hit Mr. Burns instead, and caused that sad looking gentleman to sit down in a cuspidore.

Nibbsey went off laughing, and the party disseminated itself through the caravan-sary.

When Muldoon heard the sequel to the christening snap the next morning he chuckled and said:

"I wor wise to take me own advice and shtay away from the place. Wan niver shud timpt Providence twice in the same way, be heavens, and I forgive Roger for sindin' me to the nagur's whin he kept me

have, what says dat some o' them nobbs is gettin' up a reg'lar nigger minstrel show, with end men and bones and banjoes and all dat, de hull business.

"I ain't no copybook, I ain't, what can't get up nuthin' on m'own account, but I'd just like ter show folks that wese can get up just as good a minstrel show as any o' dem. Wot d'yer soy ter that, Mul, old pard?"

"That yez do sometimes git an idee into yer head, Mike, and this is wan av thim."

"Oh, I soy, dat's boss, dat is, an' we kin have real niggers, too," shouted Nibbsey.

"No burnt cork in ours; de genuiwine ting; de real article, and all dat. Same as dey say as on de posters. Den I can do my song and dance, can't I, boss?"



"Nagurs, be heavens!" gasped Muldoon at length. "Take me out! I'll not give the honored names av Terrence and Bedalia Muldoon to any such monkey brats as thim!" There was a commotion in the place in a twinkling.

and not showing up," explained the walking delegate. "Reilly was mad, and when Burns wanted to recite a piece to thim, they walked on his shirt front."

"And I went with him!" warbled a voice on the landing above.

Looking up the gang saw Nibbsey coming down.

His red head fairly shone with glee and his eyes danced as well as his feet when he came down.

"Oh, Gee! look at them three ducks," he exclaimed. "Have youse fellies been to a scrappin' match? Mebbey you've took de contrack fur cleanin' de streets. Take me oat', but yer doin' good at it, specially old Graveyards over dere."

Dan was forced to laugh at this sally, Mr. Burns looked sad and Edward Geoghegan giggled, but the Nevada lily looked displeased.

"Say, you're a little too fresh, you terra cotta tiled young un," said Mike, "and I've a mind ter warm up yer breeches' seat, I have."

"Warm up nuthin', Whiskers," laughed the untrifled youth. "Do you know wot I think you're good fur?"

"No."

out av the cobbler's. Me lucky star would have been completely eclipsed av I'd wint there, but I did not, and Terry Muldoon is still the pet of the fairies, be heavens."

PART XVIII.

THERE was plenty of fun to be had at Muldoon's Hotel that winter, besides going to christenings and all that, and Roger was in for it every time.

When he was not rigging his dad he was off enjoying himself, and as Muldoon often fell into snaps not of Roger's making the fun was kept up just the same.

There was theater parties, dances, little exhibitions, surprises and what not, all the time and everybody was looking out for something new.

Finally Mr. Growler put in a suggestion one evening when they were all sitting in the office, which seemed to meet with general approval.

"I'm a swaller-tailed, gilt-edged old society man, I am," he began, by way of a preamble, "and I wan ter do just wot all them high-toned ducks does, just ter show 'em that I can, that's all."

"I been readin' a piece in der paper, I

"Do yez want to have the show mobbed?" asked Muldoon. "Yez'll not sing, and that settles it."

"I'll be der middleman, and you and Dan can sit on the ends," continued Mike. "Roger can play the pianner, and the rest can fill up."

"Faix, that's all very foine," said Muldoon, "but I propose to sit in the middle meself."

"You'd make a fine looking one ter sit in der middle, wouldnt yer?" sneered Mike. "Come to put cork on dat mug o' yours' and you'd look more like a ape dan ever."

"I'll throuble yez not to make anny more allusions to me personal appearance, Mr. Growler," retorted Muldoon. "Ar I had a face to dull an axe like ye, it might be necessary to make remarks."

"Minstrels is all right," said Dan, "but suppose we have whitefaced wans. How wud an Irish minstrel troupe sthrike yez, wid harpers and pipers and all that?"

"Ah, go on, we want a reg'lar nigger minstrel troupe, we do," grunted Mike. "I don't care where I sit. Put me on der end or in de middle or on der floor, I don't care. I'm nuthin' but a dizzy old door mat, I ain't, and yer can walk all over me."

"Perhaps, as yez have the biggest diamonds and the most gall, yez had better take the middle," said Muldoon, "and Dan and I'll go on the inds."

"You want four end men at least," spoke up Roger. "You and Uncle Dan can be the bones and Mr. Burns and Mr. Edward Geoghegan the tambos, pop. How's that for a flyer?"

"Dat's all right, Mul," said Mike. "Dat boy of yourn has got more sense than the whole lot of youse."

That was the way it was finally settled, and a programme was made up, Roger having this part in charge.

A stage was erected in the big hall up-

begin der show wid der chorus. Let her go!"

This was certainly quite unlike the usual way of starting a show, and grins were seen all over the house.

"Good-evenin', Mul, how are yer, Dan? Ah, there, youse fellers on der left," said Mike, when the chorus had been sung.

"I say, Mike," said Muldoon, who couldn't assume a darky dialect to save his neck, "I've got a conundrum for yez."

"Spit it out, Mul. I'm a double-breasted old Spink, I am, and yer can't catch me on no riddles, yer can't."

"Well, can yez tell me why a man wid a Frinch mother and an Italian father is an Irishman?"

Dan electrified the house with "Throw him down, McClosky," and the Honorable Mike gave them "A bunch of Shamrocks," in fine style, the melodies being interspersed with stories, jokes, snaps and quips, none of them very old, most of them fairly good and all of them very acceptable.

The first part was long and went off with great snap and vim, and then came the olio.

Muldoon and Dan did a sidewalk conversation act, Mike sang *Rocked in the Cradle of the Deep*, and wasn't mobbed, and then Nibbsy, in red flannel breeches, striped stockings, white cutaway coat and yellow vest, came on to do that celebrated song and dance of his.



"Are yez all ready?" asked Muldoon, cocking up his feet. "Yes." "Hoorah, thin—we're aff!" In another moment they were flying down the hill at the rate of two miles a minute.

stairs, scenery and a curtain put up, and in three or four days all was ready.

There was a big crowd at the show, the tickets being all complimentary and hard to get at that.

A regular orchestra of five or six pieces had been engaged, and, after an overture, up went the curtain.

Nine blackbirds standing in a row, all in full dress, were seen and the applause was tremendous.

Mike put on a dress coat, after much persuasion, and fairly glistened with diamonds, in his shirt bosom, on his fingers and dangling from his watch chain.

Muldoon was not far behind him in that respect, and he made a dandy coon, with a big flaring collar, a woolly wig and a stunning dress suit, made expressly for the occasion.

You would never have known Mr. Burns in his disguise, but the mugs of Dan and Edward Geoghegan were of too pronounced a type to be mistaken, even under cork.

Wash, Nibbsy, Frills and the Major filled in, the most of them not being expected to do anything except sit still.

"Be seated, gents," said Mike. "We'll

"He ain't."

"Yis, he is."

"What fur?"

"Because he is av mixed parentage, av coorse."

"Den we're all Micks."

"Yes, and that's phwy whiskey and molasses is a Mick's drink."

"They're after me," said Mike, and Muldoon sang an original verse to this popular ditty, as follows:

In Ireland they've been having so much trouble
and distress,
They need a leader bold and brave, their insults
to redress;
They've hunted everywhere to find a man with
brains and nerve,
Who'll lead them on to victory, his country dear
to serve;

"And they're after me, after me,
To capture me is every man's desire,
They're after me, after me,
I'm the very man that they require."

The house came down on that, of course, and the programme went on.

Mr. Burns and Mr. Geoghegan sang serio comic ditties, the Major warbled a song of the camp and field, in not such a bad voice,

The crowd did not recognize him at first, and he was allowed to get as far as:

"Oh, I love a little girl and her name it is Louise,
She's a dandy, she's a dear, and as nice as toasted
cheese,
We met down in the lane where the little daisies
grow,

And some fine day, when her dads away—"

Then the whole gang tumbled to him.

So did everything else, in fact.

First, a set cottage on the stage tumbled on him and knocked him flat.

Then a lot of oyster shells, tomato cans and brickbats tumbled on him from the flies, and rattled him.

Then, when he got out and made a break, the curtain roller just tumbled on him and broke him all up.

There was nothing else after that, and Muldoon was heard to remark:

"I might have knowed he wud hoodoo the thing, be heavens. The next show he appears in, he'll be left out entirely, so he will."

One evening when there was plenty of snow and the weather was cold and bracing, Muldoon said to the crowd in the office:

"Phwat do yez say, byes, to a moonlight

sleigh ride and a coasting party to be follied be a supper?"

Mr. Growler thought that this would be a very large way in which to spend the evening.

"I'm a gay old Esquimaux, I am, and wear a fur shirt and eat whale's blubber," he remarked, in a poetic vein, "and sliding down hill is one o' my reg'lar customs. Come on, let's go and have some fun."

Dan was also of the opinion that it would be very fine.

"Yez haven't med a more sinsible proposition in years, Terry," he remarked. "I'm wid yez, so I am."

"Sure, Mul is gettin' ter be just like he uster be," said Edward Geoghegan. "We'll all go on a coastin' racket and we won't go home till morning."

"Hal it makes me think of me glorious boyhood days," spouted the veteran, Major Buster. "You have a very large head, Muldoon, and I give you great credit for it. Ho-ho, ho-ho, a coasting we will go, over the snow, ho-ho, ho-ho."

"You are pleased to be poetical, my military friend," warbled Mr. Burns, the poet. "In my great poem, entitled 'Gloriana,' a passage occurs which is most fitting to this occasion."

"See the snow come down all white and
Glistening, skimming, sparkling,
Like cotton balls or tissue paper with their
Strips torn or mayhap wads of the same,
Covering all the landscape and then
Gloriana in woolen garb arrayed and
With a muffler and a tippet and great shoes,
Of rubber made, upon her dainty feet,
Seizes her birch bark sled and —"

"Niver mind about old Glory and her sled!" cried Muldoon, interrupting the poet. "We'll all go up-town and make a hurrah av it. Faix, I'll take the hull house."

"Kin I go, boss?" asked Nibbsey, his red locks twinkling.

"Yis, all av yez."

"Oh, gee! Dat'll be great fun. Puts me in mind of de piece at de theayter. Say, boss, just lemme give yer de last ting out:

"Oh, we met by chance in the little sunny
lane,
Me and my pretty Louise, down where de
roses bloom;
And now we're going to get married soon,
And she is my sweetest—"

"Hould an, hould an!" roared Muldoon. "Bechune ye and the major and Hippocrates Burns, I'll be dhriven woid wid potry. Let up an me."

"Ah, go on. Dat's better dan wot old Soberness givs yer," returned that incorrigible bell-boy. "He ain't no pote, he ain't."

"For wanst I agree wid yez," chuckled Muldoon.

"Den I kin go, kin I, boss?"

"Av coorse, and Wash and the cook and Frills and all hands. We'll make a regular jubilee av it, be heavens."

"Hooray!" chirped Nibbsey, as he ran off to tell the good news.

The ladies were not included in the racket, and it was just as well for them that they were not.

Roger also declined to accompany the expedition, his excuse being that the house ought not to be left alone.

"Niver moind the house at all," urged Muldoon. "It can take care av itself. Come on, me boy, and inly yersilf. It's not often that we all get off together like this."

"No, thanks, pop," said that wise youth. "I think I'd better stay at home to-night."

Something was sure to happen if all that gang went out, and Roger was satisfied not to be in it.

"Av coorse the bye wouldn't go off and lave his mother all alone in the house," exclaimed Mrs. Muldoon, when she was consulted. "I wonder that ye axed him, Terry."

"Oh, yez won't be alone, me jool," said Muldoon. "There's Mrs. Dan to talk to. She wudn't let yez be lonesome. She'd talk yer blond forst, and then there's Mary Ann, who's as good as a whole sewing society at talkin', so she is."

Mary Ann only giggled, but Mrs. Dan wasn't going to let the insult to her dignity pass unrebuked.

"Good land! I reckon you men beat all creation at talkin' when you get started," she snapped. "I never did see the beat of it, but let me tell you, Terrence Muldoon,

you bald-headed old chimpanzee, that if you go to leading my poor, dear husband astray or get him into any scraps I won't give you a moment's peace, and as for talking folks blind, I do believe that one man can talk more in one hour than ten women could in six, and it's real mean for an old gorilla like you, Terrence Muldoon, to go and slander the women so, when you —"

"Police!" yelled Muldoon. "Shtop pulin' the shtring, some wan, or she'll go an that way all night."

"You're a brute!" snapped the lady, tossing her head.

"Hould an, sither-in-law, that's wan av Bedalia's pet names, and it's copyrighted," laughed Muldoon.

A big sleigh and two horses were procured, and Muldoon, Dan, Mike, Burns, Edward Geoghegan, Major Buster, Wash, Rufus, Nibbsey, Frills and two or three boarders drove off in high glee.

"Wall, now, I neber tort de boss had so much sense," remarked Rufus to Wash. "He ain't so bad, aftah all, on'y he's fish, but dar, he kean' help dat."

"Neber yo' min' 'bout de boss, Rufe Jackson," said the porter. "Dere am wuss fellahs dan him, I tol' yo'."

Frills did not think it compatible with his dignity to sit with the cook, the porter or the bell boy, and he got in with Mike and Mr. Burns, although he really considered himself far superior to either of them.

"Oh, I say, dis is just gallus, dis is," sang out Nibbsey, as they went spinning along. "Dere ain't no skeeters on us, is dere, hey, boss?"

Nibbsey had on a big cap with flaps to it and wore a coat over his usual jumper, and you wouldn't have known him except for his dirty face and laughing eyes.

"Hould yer whisht, me red-headed canary bird down there," said Muldoon, "or yez'll get thrun into a shnow bank the forst thing yez knows."

Muldoon was driving, and he did not care to have his attention taken off the horses by having to listen to any remarks made by that festive bell boy.

"Ah! this reminds me of the winter campaign of '62 when we rode straight into the enemy's camp."

"The time yez dhruv a baggage wagon, wasn't it, major?" asked Muldoon.

"No, sah, I was at the head of my command, sah, the Fifteenth Faginyah regiment, sah, true to the North, sah. I never drove a baggage wagon, sah, I'll have yo' remembah, sah," answered the major, getting his dander up.

"Oh, I thot maybe yez did," said Muldoon, who was not to put down by any fire-eating Virginian. "Yez are not bow-legged enough to have ridden a harse very much."

"Recollect, sah, to who yo' ah talking sah," sputtered the veteran, trying to work himself into a passion.

"Ah, go roll in der snow and cool off," snorted the Honorable Mike. "Dis is a pleasure party, dis is, and no bloomin' prize fight."

"Av coorse not," chuckled Muldoon, "for av it wor a fight, yez wudn't be in it, Mike. Yez knows when to kape out av harrum's way."

"Shut up, youse fellers," said the walking delegate, assuming the role of peace-maker. "Can't youse sing sumpin'? That's the proper steer."

"I'm a warblin' old nightingale with a silver troat, I am," said Mr. Growler, "and if youse fellers kin come in on der chorus, I'll give yer Sweet Katy Connor, and if yer don't like it, yer can get out and walk."

Nobody objected, and Mike sang, and then Dan and Edward Geoghegan warbled, and finally all hands broke forth.

At last, when they were pretty well up town and away from the houses, Muldoon hauled up and said:

"Over yonder is a fine hill for coasting, and beyant is a stable where we can put the sleigh and get a bob-sled. I know the man well, and he'll do me a favor av I ax um, ivery toime."

"Ain't it kinder dry coming up here?" muttered the Honorable Mike. "I'm thinking that suthin's hot would go fust rate."

"Yez are very considerate to think av us, Mike," said Muldoon, "and I am able

to inform yez that there's a refectory connected wid the establishment I mitioned, so that yez can threat us all. That's phwat yez intinded, av coorse."

The Nevada celebrity could not get out of it, and later on, all hands were looking into the bottoms of several upturned tumblers, while a pungent, aromatic odor could be observed hanging around the place.

After this, Muldoon got a big bob sled or double runner, capable of holding a good round dozen persons, and off they all started to the top of the hill behind the house.

"We can go nearly to the river," said Muldoon, "and it's a foine straight road all the way."

"Who's goin' ter steer, that's wot I want ter know?" asked Mr. Growler.

"To be sure, who is?" added Dan. "It's got to be some one who knows all about it."

"I have led mah rig'ment, sah, the Fifteenth Fajiniyah, sah, to the front of the battle, sah, and I reckon I can steer a bob sled, sah," remarked Major Buster.

"It is absolutely indispensable in such an emergency as this to have a reliable steersman," said the poetically inclined Mr. Burns.

"Let me steer, boss?" cried Nibbsey. "I'm just a dandy at it, I am."

Muldoon looked around upon the moonlit group to see if any one else desired to say anything.

"Have yez all spoken?" he asked, in proud disdain, such as befitted the ancient house of Muldoon.

"Who's goin' ter steer?" asked the Lily of Nevada.

"Who's goin' to steer, is it?" repeated our landlord. "Phwat a question. There's only wan mon in all the gang thot I'd let steer, and that's mesilf."

"You! Oh, go 'way!"

"Geel hear de boss shout!"

"H'm! wha' cheek he hab got!"

"Faix, Terry's right, so he is."

"Oh, sah—really, sah—this is too much!"

Everybody had something to say, either for or against the proposition.

"It's no use in yer kickin', byes," said Muldoon at length. "Do yez think I want to risk me life wid wan av ye gillies a steerin'? No, be heavens, I do not, and furthermore, I'm not goin' to."

"What's der matter with Mul steerin', anyway?" asked Mike. "It's his party, and he's got der bob, and if youse fellers kick, yer won't get a ride, dat's all—see?"

It was, therefore, settled that Muldoon was to do the steering, and there were no further objections.

Muldoon took his seat in front, grasped the steering lines and waited for the gang to get on.

Behind him came Dan and Mr. Burns, Edward Geoghegan and Nibbsey, and then the Honorable Mike Growler, the two nigs, the major, Frills and the boarders.

There was a full moon in the sky, a big bull's-eye lantern in front of the bob, and plenty of snow all around, so there was all the light they wanted.

"Are yez all ready?" asked Muldoon, cocking up his feet.

"Yes."

"Hoorah, thin—we're aff!"

In another moment they were flying down the hill at the rate of two miles a minute.

PART XIX.

DOWN the hill all a flying went Muldoon and his party on the bob sled.

The wind whistled through their whiskers, the moon shone bright, the snow glistened all around and everything was lovely.

"Hooroo! Away we go, me byes," yelled Muldoon.

"Dere ain't no flies on us, you bet," remarked Mr. Growler.

"Oh, golly! dis am just like goin' to heaben," exclaimed Wash.

"Very exciting, sah. Just like the skirmish befo' Richmond, sah," cried Major Buster.

"What's de matter wid de boss on steerin' now?" exploded Nibbsey.

That red-headed youth was just a trifle too previous in his encomiums on Muldoon's steering.

Down the hill they went, apparently all right, but really all wrong.

In the first place, their road led them right alongside where a cellar had been dug for a new house and had then been left.

It was now full of snow to the very top, and was fifteen feet deep if it was an inch.

In the next place, Muldoon mistook a big, snow-covered rock for a natural rise in the ground, and steered straight for it.

He was going to give his party a bounce, and so he did.

Thump!

There was not as much snow on that rock as there looked to be.

"I'm an old polar bear, I are, and I can stay all winter under der snow, but I can't stand having a nigger's heels stuck in my mouth and dat's where I kick."

At that another head came up out of the snow and the fiery tempered Major Buster remarked:

"Yo' ah an impostah, sah, a reg'lah swindle, sah, and yo' don't know no mo' about steering, sah, than a cat, sah, no sah, you don't, sah, and if you desiah to take it up, sah, I am Major Bustah, sah, of the fifteenth Faginyah rig'ment, sah."

"Ah, go soak yer head, old Skyrocket, dat's all yer good fur," said Nibsey, whose red head now appeared from another hole in the snow not far from the major.

wan av yer pomes, and it caused me to jibe the schooner and turn us all out."

"Talkin' of schooners," muttered Mike Growler, "I could get away wid one of hot Scotch about as quick as yer could make it up."

"I don't see the expediency av staying here in the snow all night meself," said Dan. "Suppose we get a move on us?"

"That reminds me of a passage," said Mr. Burns, who at once proceeded to quote:

Like down upon the bed clothes lying,
Like frosting high upon the sweet cake piled,
So hung the snow immaculate
About the lonely dwelling sequestered,
Of Glorianna, rapturous maiden,
Till now the sun, forth shining—"



"I'm the only survivor, be heavens," he muttered, looking all about, "and wanst more has me good luck stud by me." Then he noticed a number of holes or depressions in the white expanse of the snow all around him.

The bob rose in the air, and then tumbled over on its side in a trice.

Muldoon felt himself shooting through the air as though shot out of a cannon.

Then he struck something soft and yielding, and went down until he couldn't see the moon.

Suddenly he stopped, and was lifted up two or three feet.

He had struck a ledge in the cellar wall, being more fortunate than his comrades.

His head was now above the level, and he gazed all around in search of his friends.

Not a solitary one could he see, although the sleds lay bottom up on the snow, not far away.

"I'm the only survivor, be heavens," he muttered, looking all about, "and wanst more has me good luck stud by me."

Then he noticed a number of holes or depressions in the white expanse of the snow all around him, as though somebody with enormous feet had been tramping over the place.

"Faix, I wondher av thim big stuffs med thim holes or phwat?" he mused.

Presently the head of the Honorable Mike came up out of the hole nearest to Muldoon and that gentleman's voice said:

At the same time there was a commotion in the snow in Nibsey's near neighborhood, a woolly head popped up, and Rufus remarked:

"Ef dey wasn' fo'teen foot ob snow atween yo' an' me, yo' big 'Tish loafah, I'd punch yo' head fo' dat!"

"Another ward heard from and more to folly," chuckled Muldoon, who wasn't as much afraid of the cook as formerly.

"Close yer mouth, ye liver-lipped monstrosity, or I'll close it for ye wid a lump av shnow."

Frills was the next to pop up out of the snow, remarking in characteristic words:

"Breakfast at eight, sir, lunch at twelve. Any orders?"

Then up jumped Dan, likewise Mr. Edward Geoghegan, and also Wash, the porter, all at the same time.

"The clans are gathering," laughed Muldoon; "but phwere is Hippocrates Burns, the mad-house pote?"

"I disclaim the title," answered Mr. Burns, coming out of his hole. "I am the Virgil of a later day, the Homer of to-morrow, the—"

"Jackass av to-day," chirped Muldoon. "Faix, I think thot yez wor about to recite

Mr. Burns suddenly ceased, his utterances being choked by a big wad of snow which Muldoon, with unerring aim, had hurled full in his teeth.

Then down popped every head except the poet's, and naught could be seen except sundry holes in the snow.

Mr. Burns was not a fool, if he was a poet, and when a head presently popped up he chuckled a snow ball at it and then dove under cover himself.

Mr. Growler got that crack, and he waited until Edward Geoghegan peeped out to see if the coast was clear and then soaked him.

"Come on, let's git out av this," said Muldoon, when half the crowd had got hit. "It may be warm here now, but a snow bank is not the best bed in the world and I propose to lave mine. Who'll have something to take the chill off um?"

It was astonishing how quickly that gang scrambled out of the cellar and upon good ground after that.

In a brace of shakes they were all out and making a bee line for the nearest caravan-sary.

There was no more coasting after that, you can be certain.

doon. "Faix, he'll give the dure a fine yank whin I tell him."

"Wot yer say?" asked Mike, as Muldoon hammered on the door again.

Muldoon stood back at the end of the cord, braced himself, and said:

"Hurry up, yer chuckle-headed sucker, or yez'll be roasted to a cinder. The house is on fire!"

The Honorable Mike needed no second invitation.

The way he rushed for that door was a corker.

Here was where Muldoon was the victim of misplaced confidence.

That door opened outwards instead of inwards, and was the only one in the house that did.

Just make believe that Roger didn't know it!

Mr. Growler lost no time in getting out of the room when he thought the place was on fire.

Bang!

The door flew wide open in a jiffy, and out tore Mike in a terrible hurry.

Alas for poor Muldoon!

The door banged him in the nose to start with, and then out came Mike, pell-mell.

He tumbled slap into Muldoon, and down went both of them in a heap.

The cord did not break, and out came that tooth as neat as a whistle.

Mr. Growler, being very much rattled by his sudden fall, began to yell like sin and to punch his brother-in-law in a fit of absent-mindedness.

Then out came Mrs. Growler, and also Romeo and Evangeline Growler, all very much scared.

Muldoon had not reckoned upon their being in the room with Mike.

They came out so fast that they all tumbled over Mike and Muldoon, and then there was music and no discount to the trade.

Mary Ann Growler had a high soprano voice, and she could make a noise with it, you may be certain.

"Where's the fire?" she shrieked, as she fell over her husband.

"Fire, fire! Oh, mamma!" howled Evangeline Growler.

"Oh, dey ain't no fire," blurted out young Romeo Growler, giving Muldoon a kick in the ear with his copper-toed boots.

The cry quickly spread, being repeated on all sides.

"Fire—fire!" rang up and down the corridors.

"Fire!" was repeated from flight to flight.

"Where is it?" cried some one.

"On de fuss flo"—Marse Growler's room," said Wash.

Even Roger was not quick enough to prevent what now happened.

Dan and his wife, Mr. Burns the poet, Edward Geoghegan, Major Buster, Wash, Rufus, Nibbsey, and half a dozen star boarders came rushing to the spot armed with water pitchers.

They were all full, every one of them—the pitchers, of course—and the bearers meant business.

The Honorable Mike somehow got out of the tangle just in time, and so did his wife and sweet infants.

Not so the unfortunate Muldoon, however.

Swish—swash—splash!

The contents of a dozen water pitchers were emptied upon him all at once.

The whole crowd must have been rattled, but at any rate Terry was put out even if he wasn't on fire.

"Ugh! howld on!" he sputtered, nearly drowned. "Phwat are yez doing?"

"Putting out the fire," explained Mr. Burns.

"Sure, there's no fire at all," said Muldoon. "That wor all a fake."

"I'm a quiet little feller wid yeller curls and blue eyes, and yer can stick pins in me and all that," muttered Mike, "but when a chicken-witted chump yells fire in der middle of der night just fur a joke, I gets mad, I do."

"For shame, Terry," said Mrs. Muldoon, who now appeared. "I didn't think yez wud carry practical joking that far, so I didn't."

"Yez orter be shot, so yez had," growled Edward Geoghegan.

"It's a foine joker ye are, Terry, alarm-in' the hull house," said Dan, reproachfully.

His lady wife was not so moderate in her expressions of disapproval.

"Just like that addle-headed Irishman!" she vociferated. "Such natural born fools as you shouldn't orter live, they hadn't, and I wonder you ever had sense enough to come over here. That's just like a man anyhow, they hain't got no gumption, none of 'em."

Meanwhile, Muldoon was shivering and shaking with the cold, the water having been put on ice, apparently just for his benefit.

"Don't get a fit, yees people," he remarked. "It wor not me intention to alarrum the house, but only to get Mike Growler out so's to pull me toot', but the brave mon med all the n'ise, him and his lovely family."

"Pull yer tooth, hey?" snapped Mike. "Yer hain't got none, yer old stuff; yer hain't got sense enough ter have teeth yet. Ye're nuthin but a baby, you ain't."

It was not often that Muldoon got mad, but this was one of the times.

"Go an, ye gas bag," he sputtered.

"Don't talk about having sense, for when it comes to that, ye're not in it. Didn't yez rin out like a mad thing the moment I hollied, and niver see me at all, and me shtandin' furninst yez? Sure, yez knows that if there wor a fire, the alarrum wud be given quiteely and not a song and dance med av it. Go an back to the peraries, ye Western gawk, and learn sinse or get in-oculated wid the brains av a pig and take yer proper place in society, be heavens."

Then away went Muldoon, leaving a wet trail behind him, while the Honorable Mike sneaked off, followed by the jeers of the crowd.

"Say, ole man, what's dis hangin' to de door knob?" asked Romey Growler a moment later.

"Faix, it's a tooth, so it is," said Mary Ann.

"It belongs to pop," laughed Roger.

"Mike pulled it out for him, but not in the way he expected."

"Sure, that's like Terry," said Mrs. Muldoon, when Roger had explained; "but phy didn't yez pick out a dure that opened another way, Roger?"

"Oh, that's telling, ma," laughed the young scamp.

"Yer getting worse and worse, Roger Muldoon," said the lady, but with a certain fondness withal, "and I don't know phwat we'll do wid yez."

"I can do for myself, ma," chuckled Roger. "But now that the fuss is over, Wash and the rest of the gang might mop up the water to keep it from spoiling the ceilings."

"I tell yo', sah," said Major Buster at this, "that boy is a corkah, sah, yas, sah, a regulah corkah."

To this frank opinion, honestly expressed, all hands gave their acquiescence.

PART XX.

THINGS went booming at Muldoon's Hotel in these days, and no one

had any cause to complain of a lack either of business or fun, for there was plenty of both.

Roger continued to be a corker, but he did not always play roots on Muldoon, there being other material to work on.

Our good fellow to play larks on was Nibbsey, the redheaded bell-boy.

You couldn't often fool him, and that's why Roger enjoyed getting a gag off on him, not too often, but just occasionally.

Just now one of the occasions came around.

Nibbsey was asleep in his room one morning, when there came a thump at his door.

"Fire!" yelled some one through the keyhole.

Up jumped that redheaded youth, tumbled into his trousers, hitched up his one suspender and bolted.

When he reached the hall, he went sousing into a pail of water, placed for his convenience just outside.

"Oh, Gee! Who put dat dere?" he sputtered.

Then he got up and saw young Roger laughing at him.

"Where's de fire?" he asked, in breathless haste.

"Well, your head looks as if you'd run through one with your hat off, young fellow."

"Ah, go on, never mind me head, where's de fire?"

"Who said there was a fire at all?"

"You did."

"Did I?"

"Yes."

"Whin?"

"Just now."

"Sure?"

"Didn't yer holler fire through de key-hole?"

"Oh, I meant that I wanted a fire. My room is as cold as a barn."

Then away went Roger with a grin on his face, and Nibbsey scratched his head.

"Don't agitate the coals or you'll have 'em on fire in a jiffy," laughed Roger.

"Ah, say, let my head alone, will yer?"

"I don't want to touch it, I might scorch my fingers."

Then Roger went down stairs and Nibbsey retired to his room to finish his toilet.

"Dat young feller is a case," he remarked. "But he don't often catch me anyhow."

Then he began to do that song and dance of his until Major Buster, sah, who had the room below him, pounded on the ceiling and demanded to know what all that noise was about.

"Now Old Sulphurous has got 'em," remarked Nibbsey. "Dey ain't no peace for a feller in dis house. It's a reg'lar nest of kickers from de boss down to de porter. Reckon I better discharge meself and hire over again as clerk."

The next fellow that Roger sold was Mr. Growler.

That cyclonic gentleman was shaving himself in the office when the scion of the Muldoons went below.

"Why don't you shave up-stairs, Mike?" asked Roger.

"Oh, yes, you would, wid two kids foolin' around you and fallin' over yer feet just when you're going upon yer troat wid der razor, wouldn't yer?" retorted Mike.

"You shouldn't have such big feet."

"Ah, go on, don't de potry books say dat a man orter have a large understanding?"

"Well, if your brains were in your feet, you'd be a phenomenon."

"Oh, go on," said Mike, proceeding to lather his jaws.

"Look out?" yelled Roger with startling suddenness.

The result was that Mr. Growler jabbed the brush in his eye and nearly filled that useful organ with soapsuds.

"Ouch! wot's der matter wid yer?" he sputtered. "What yer do that fur, hey?"

"Told you to look out, but you didn't do it," chuckled that bad youth.

"Ah, you're too fresh for this town," muttered Mike. "Go back to Ireland where they like green things."

"Ireland?" said Roger, musingly.

"Where's that? Ireland? I never heard of the place. Do you mean the Fourth ward?"

Such a disrespectful remark as that was more than the lily of Nevada could stand.

Not know where Ireland was, indeed!

"Why Ireland is der biggest country in der world," he growled. "Go ax yer pop where it is, and see wot he'll say. Don't know where Ireland is? Why you must be green."

"Never heard of it," said Roger, seriously.

"Ah, go on," growled Mike. "Why, Ireland's in Europe, that's where it is."

"When did they find it? It ain't on my map."

Mr. Growler was fast getting very mad.

"Ain't on your map, ain't it? Well, yer better go and find it, then! Where'd you've been if it hadn't been fur Ireland?"

"Honestly, now, where is it?" asked Roger, with great earnestness.

Then Mr. Growler got real mad and began to explain all about it.

Suddenly he realized that Roger was laughing at him, and he tumbled to the fact that he had been very badly sold.

"Well, I'm a wide-awake old joker myself," he muttered, "and I sleep wid one eye open, but dat's der time yer got me."

"Yes, and it won't be the last," chirped Roger, as he went off to hunt up some breakfast.

On the way he met Mr. Burns, the poet, with a far-away look on his classic countenance.

"Heard the latest thing out, Burns?" asked the young joker.

"No, my boy; what is it?" replied the poet, eager for news.

"The street lamps, of course. They beat even you for brilliancy."

"Ha! pretty good!" muttered Burns.

"Have you heard the last stanzas to my poem? They are great."

"They are like that last joke of mine," said Roger.

"How's that?"

"Founded on gas," and Roger winked the other eye and skipped.

Later in the day the young fellow got off a good one on Mr. Edward Geoghegan, the walking delegate.

Roger came in with a rose in his button-hole, although it was the middle of winter, and roses came high.

Edward Geoghegan was standing at the desk, talking to Mr. Growler, and got onto it.

"Sure it's a fine dude ye are to be wearing roses at this time of year," he remarked.

"Yes," said Roger. "Want to smell of it?"

"No, I don't. That's not a rose at all yez have in yer coat."

"What is it then?" asked that innocent youth.

"There's a squirt behind it, and ye'll trow water in me face when I go to smell of it."

"Oh, no, you're away off, it's nothing of the kind. It's a regular rose. Smell of it, Mike."

"I'm a Jim Dandy of a joker myself," remarked the Nevada statesman, "and I can tell a snap a mile off. Dat's no trick rose," and he put down his nose and took a whiff.

"Elegant smell it's got, too," he observed.

"Reckon Mul won't make any money if yer go buyin' roses these days."

"Smells good, doesn't it?" asked Roger, carelessly.

"Prime!"

The rose looked innocent enough, and Mr. Geoghegan bent down to take a smell of it.

Then that bad fellow touched a button under his coat, and Edward Geoghegan got the point of a needle in his nose.

"Glory, I knowed it wor loaded all the time," he howled, jumping back and grabbing hold of his nose.

"What yer want to be such a sucker for then?" snorted the Honorable Mike.

"I said there was no water in it, didn't I?" laughed Roger.

"Go on, you young villain," said Mr. Geoghegan. "Yez ought te be kilt, so ye had."

"Next man," said Roger, starting toward the floor above.

Just then Nibbsey came along, saw the rose and said:

"Oh, gee! ain't dat a la-la? Gimme that, will yer, young feller?"

"Certainly, take it," said Roger, with great politeness.

Nibbsey closed his hand over that flower and proceeded to take it.

A needle in his thumb made him suddenly desist from the attempt.

"Gee! what pricklers it's got!" he howled, dancing and shaking his hand.

"Why didn't yer tell me it had spikes in it?"

"Want to try again?" asked Roger, with a sweet smile.

"Bet yer life I don't. Dat's twice you've done me up to-day."

"Well, maybe I can catch some other sucker," laughed Roger, going up-stairs.

That same day Muldoon got caught on a snap not of Roger's getting up.

He started out in the afternoon for a walk, wearing his high dicer and a dizzy ulster, and carrying a big silver-headed stick.

You couldn't say he was on the mash exactly, but he looked just too high toned for anything.

He was walking along a quiet street where they had low stoops and English

basements, when biff! he got a load of snow right on top of him.

It had been thawing that day, and the snow on the roof overhung the eaves.

Of course it wouldn't fall off at any other time, but had to wait till Muldoon came along.

There wasn't so very much of it, but there was quite enough for all practical purposes.

Muldoon sat down on the walk with startling alacrity, his stick flying into the gutter and his silk dicer jammed over his ears.

"Be heavens, I'm kilt!" he muttered in smothered accents. "And it's in heaven I am this minute. I know it's not the other place be the timperature."

He struggled out of his hat and found himself sitting in the midst of a pile of snow.

"Faix, it must have been a big feller to make a snowball that size," he grunted.

Then he looked up and saw just where the snow had come from.

"I'll complain, so I will," he muttered, getting up. "People have no right to lave the snow an the roof, endangering the loives av the pedestrians. I'll inter a protest at wanst."

Straightening out his hat and picking up his stick, Muldoon ascended the steps of the house from the roof of which the snow had fallen and rang loudly at the bell.

While waiting for some one to come he began to compose a speech fitting for the occasion.

He had got it into pretty good shape, when it suddenly occurred to him that he had been waiting quite a time.

"They couldn't have h'ard me. I'll ring again," he remarked.

This time he gave a dandy old pull at the bell, and he could hear it jingling all over the house.

"That'll fetch thim, I imagine," he said, as he began to rehearse his speech.

It did not, however, and five minutes passed away, no one appearing.

"Faix, I wondher av I've struck a deaf and dumb asylum," he muttered, looking up.

There was no sign to that effect, and once more he made that bell rattle.

"They're afraid av me, that's phwat they are; but I'll rouse thim av I have to pull the ould bell out be the roots."

Dingaling—ding—ding—ding!

If there had been anybody in that house they could not have helped hearing that peal.

That was just the secret of Muldoon's standing there so long.

The house was unoccupied, and had been for a week.

He never thought of that, however, but presently gave the bell another yank.

Of course no one came, and Muldoon, after waiting a minute or two, repeated the dose.

He had done this three or four times, when a red-headed servant girl came out of the next house and remarked:

"Haven't you got any more sense than to keep ringing that bell?"

Muldoon considered the question irrelevant, but he nevertheless answered:

"I'm goin' to kape an ringing this bell till some wan comes and gives me an explanation."

"Oh, you are?" repeated the lady with the old rose bangs.

"I am, be heavens!"

"You've got lots of time to spare, haven't you?"

"I have not, but it's principle I'm shtandin' up for, and I'm not goin' away till I have an iplanation."

Tingaling-ting!

"What do you want an explanation about?"

"I want to know for why they don't kape the snow off the roof."

"Oh, you want to know that, do you?"

"Yis, I do. Some fell on me just now, and I wor nearly buried."

Ting-ting-dingalingding!

"And you're going to wait there till somebody comes?"

"I am that!"

Ding-ding-ding!

"Well, I hope you won't get tired."

"I will not, faix."

"If you'd like, I'll send you out a bed when it gets dark."

"No, I thank ye."

Dingalingding!

"Well, you've got patience, anyhow, but it won't do you much good."

"We'll see if it won't!"

Ding-ding-ding!

Muldoon was now keeping up a steady yank at that bell.

"So long, Sluggers," said the girl next door; "I'll see you at the inquest."

Then she went in, and Muldoon went on with his wire pulling.

"They're trying to tire me out, but they won't do it," he muttered.

Presently a boy with a basket on his arm came along, stopped, looked at Muldoon, and asked:

"Say, are yer doing that fur fun, or are yer got ter?"

"I'm doin' it for business, but I'll hire ye av yez are in no hurry."

"What yer ringin' der bell for, anyhow?"

"Because I want the people to come out."

The boy laughed, danced a few steps, and then remarked:

"Well, you're a daisy, you are!"

"For why do yez make that assertion?"

"Why, dey ain't no people livin' in dat house, and dere ain't been for a month."

Muldoon went right away from that house, and the bell had a rest.

"Be heavens! that's just my luck. Av the house had been occupied the snow wouldn't have fell on me. No wondher the girrul nixt dure said that I had patience. Anny wan but a faymale, howiver, wud have towld me phy I couldn't bring anny wan out."

It was now that Roger thought of a good trick to play upon his dad, and he made his preparations accordingly.

Of course you remember the minstrel entertainment which Muldoon and his friends gave, in the parlor?

The thing was going to be repeated, and this is how it all came about.

A week or so after the show letters began to come in asking that another performance be given.

Here are a few sample letters which Muldoon received:

NEW YORK, Feb. 16.

"MR. MULDOON,—Having been unable to attend your celebrated minstrel entertainment, I wish you would repeat it for my benefit.

"DEPEW."

THE METROPOLIS, Feb.

"DEAR MR. MULDOON,—Would you oblige me and the four hundred by repeating your famous minstrel show?

"MCALLISTER."

FIFTH AVENUE HOTEL.

"DEAR MUL,—Please repeat minstrels. AM dying to see you in black.

SHERMAN."

BROOKLYN, Tuesday.

"FRIEND MULDOON,—As an entertainer you beat even me. I am desirous of seeing your unrivaled minstrel entertainments.

TALMAGE."

These were only a few of the many letters received.

Others came, signed by such distinguished names as Buffalo Bill, Jack Dempsey, Bob Ingersoll, Sarah Bernhardt, Lawrence Barrett and Stanley, to mention only a few.

"I'm getting more famous than ever, be heavens," said Muldoon, when he had read a dozen or more of these epistles.

"Sure, it's iligant swells we are entoirely," said Mrs. Muldoon.

"Honest murret is sure to make itself known, Bedalia," said Muldoon. "Sure, I wouldn't be sorprised av the Asthurs and the Vanderbilts and them axed me to give the entertainment in their parlors."

"Yis, and maybe yez could hire the Opery House, Terry, and admit yer frinds be ticket only, no money taken at the dures."

"Sure, it's a social lion I am. Let me see, how wud Chuesday next do for the entertainment?"

"That'll be all right, Terry, for we want to see the African at the Opery on Wednesday."

"Phwat African, faith?"

"The opery av that name, av coorse, Lee African, be Mither Morebeer."

"Oh, yes, I remimber. Well, thin, we'll say Chuesday, and I'll sind invitations to all me friends."

The letters were written, but, it is needless to add, were never sent to the famous individuals for whom they were intended.

Roger tampered with the mails, intercepted those letters, swiped the stamps and was happy.

All the same, there was a big crowd to see the show.

Roger looked out for that, and he had half a dozen of his chums posted in the first row.

He was there himself, likewise, ready for business.

Up went the curtain, disclosing the semicircle of burnt cork artists, Muldoon in the middle, the Honorable Mike and Dan on the tamborine end, and Mr. Burns and Mr. Geoghegan handling the bones.

"Good-evening, gentlemen," said Muldoon.

"Say, Mul," said Mike, "why are we like a young widder?"

"I give it up."

"Because we don't stay long in black."

There was more truth than first appeared in that remark.

PART XXI.

AS soon as the Honorable Mike got off that old time gag, there was a commotion.

Roger and his chums arose in their seats, each armed with what looked like a big pop gun.

Puff!

Sudden change from black to white without leaving the stage.

They did not stay long in black for a fact.

Those pop guns were syringes and were filled with flour.

When the rods were pushed in the flour flew out.

In two shakes those blacked up Micks were as white as snow.

There was a great scattering, too, when the flour struck them.

"Oh, be heavens, I'm shot!" yelled Muldoon, dancing up and down.

"Phwat wor that?" howled Dan, digging at his eyes.

"Ha-ha! I am attacked in a vital part!" cried the poetical Mr. Burns.

"I'm an old North Pole explorer, I am," remarked Mr. Growler of Nevada, "but I never did like snow."

"If I find out who did that I'll boycott him!" said Edward Geoghegan in a business like tone.

Meanwhile Roger and his chums had hidden their guns, and were now sitting down enjoying the show.

The audience just howled at the transformation of those stage darkies into ghosts, and thought it the funniest thing in the world.

"Get on to the clowns!"

"Looks as if a blizzard had struck 'em!"

"Go on with the show; it's awful funny!"

"Guess those niggers must be scared, they turn so pale!"

Muldoon was the first to recover himself after the storm.

He could guess what had happened, judging from the whiteness of his apparel, and he had a dim recollection also of having seen Roger aim a gun or something at him.

He gave himself a shake, and advancing to the footlights said:

"We have been requested be a number av ladies and gintlemen av the highest respectability to give this performance, and be heavens we're goin' to give it if it rains flour barrels! Mr. Burns will sing the favorite ballad 'A Bunch of Shamrock.' Let her go, byes!"

"One pound of flour, Shamrock brand," sang out some one.

"The flower of the family, Mr. Burns," laughed somebody else.

"Only a Little Faded Flour, that's what you want to sing, Burns."

"How about 'Beautiful Snow,' old man? Give us that."

"Coming Thro' the Rye-flour. How will that do?"

"In this wheat, by and by, wheat flour, Muldoon stock."

Mr. Burns was all this time endeavoring to sing about the little bunch of shamrocks from my poor old mother dear. He might have been singing "Old Hundred" or

"Johnny, Get Your Gun," for all that any one knew.

There was too much of a racket for anything to be heard.

In fact, it was quite evident that no one wanted to hear the show at all.

The fuss had been started, and all hands desired to keep it up.

Somebody fetched out a harmonicon and played on it and somebody else produced a jewsharp and started an opposition concert.

Then Muldoon and Mike got off some brand new jokes, but they might have been time honored old gags just as well for nobody heard them.

Mr. Geoghegan was next introduced and announced to sing: "My Pal Jack," but it must have been in dumb show, as the old playbooks say, for not a word was heard.

Cat-calls, irrelevant remarks, discords on the jewsharp, mouth-organ, and with canes and umbrellas on the floor, were all the sounds that could be heard, and even the band was not in it.

Then Muldoon got mad, arose, came forward and said:

"Yez may think this is a circus or a salvation army celebration, but it's nayther and I'll parlyze the mon that makes anny further disturbance. This thing don't cost yez a cint and yez oughter have manners enough to sit quite and be intertained like gentlemine, be heavens, and not like a lot av hoodlums."

"Dat's what I say," supplemented the Honorable Mike. "I'm Mary's little sheep fur gentleness, I am, but when I get riled I'm a regular roaring old coyote from Deadman's Crossing, I am, and yer can smell my breath fur two miles."

"Give us a song and dance, you two fellows," said somebody.

"The Kilkenny twins will now oblige."

"Muldoon and Mike Growler in a grand scrapping match."

"Be heavens, av yez don't kape ordher I'll get Hippocrates Burns to recite five hundred verses of his celebrated pome, 'Gloriana and the Jimjams,' so I will," threatened Muldoon.

The prospect of being thus inflicted so awed that crowd of funny fellows that after that you could have heard the grass growing.

The show went on for a little while, but when Nibbsey came out to do that song and dance of his the fracas broke out anew.

They just would not have it, and Nibbsey had to retreat after singing two lines, the crowd having by that time tumbled to his identity.

Then the gang began to get tired, and some went out, followed by groups of three, four, six and a dozen, until there wasn't anybody but Mrs. Muldoon, Mrs. Dan, Mrs. Growler and her children, and a deaf old lady from around the corner, who had slept through all the racket, and only awoke when the noise stopped.

"I'll not be med a fool av anny longer," said Muldoon, at last. "The show is over, and I belave it wor a put-up job all along. Wait till I see Roger. Be heavens, he'll think a house fell an him."

"Ah, dat's a skin, go on wid de minstrels," piped up young Romeo Growler. "I want to hear my popper sing suffin', I do."

"Be quiet, Romey," said Mary Ann, but the young Growler continued to protest until Mike, descending from the stage, persuaded him with a drumstick that his noise was not wanted.

Muldoon resolved after this that in the event of getting up a good thing, as in the case of the first minstrel show, he would not spoil it by giving a repetition of the same.

Roger did not suffer any dire punishment for his little snap, and he was quite ready to perpetrate something else as soon as a convenient opportunity arrived.

It was not long before one came along and the young scamp jumped into it with both feet.

One day a man came in and wanted to sell Muldoon a fine parrot.

"Faix, I had wan wanst," said the Solid Man, "and it insulted me be singing 'God save the Queen' and I want no more av thim."

"But this isn't that sort of a parrot,"

urged the man. "It doesn't jabber all the time, this bird doesn't."

"Sure then me wife wud like that, for she'll have all the more opporchunity to talk herself."

"No, this bird doesn't talk much, but when he does speak it's worth listening to him."

"Is it then?"

"It is indeed. The words of wisdom that fall from that bird's lips are worth listening to."

"Thin he'll not call me an ould gorilla and tell me to shave the moss off me teeth."

"No, indeed, he would not be so impolite."

"Nor call me wife an ould hin, and ax her what excuse she do have for livin'?"

"By no means. He is a very respectful bird."

"Have yez it wid yez in the box?" asked Muldoon, pointing to a box the bird man had.

"Yes. Would you like to see him?"

"I would."

The man opened the box and took out a big white bird which he placed on his shoulder.

"Faix that's a funny-looking Poll parrot," remarked Muldoon. "I thot they did be green, or yaller, or blue, or some color like that."

"This is the very rare Polar parrot, and they are always white, you know."

"A Polar wan?" cried Muldoon. "So they have parrots in thim regions? I thot they only lived in warrum latichudes."

"Quite a mistake, my dear sir, a most decided mistake. They have parrots at the North Pole, but they are very rare."

"Why, don't they freeze to death up in thim cold climates?"

"Nature provides against it, just the same as with the bears, the foxes and other hyperborean creatures."

"Yer don't tell me? Well, well! How soon do yez suppose the birrud will talk?"

"Oh, in a few minutes."

"Faix, he don't look like anny other parrot I iver saw."

"Of course not. You never did see another like it."

"And don't he look wise and solemn? Faix, he might be a judge an the binch passin' sentence."

"Oh, yes, he's a very wise bird, and worth double the price I ask for him, sir."

"Phwat do yez want for him?"

"Ten dollars."

"I'll give yez five," said Muldoon.

"Take him at that," retorted the other so promptly that Muldoon wished he had gone lower.

The dealer took the five cases, and the bird was put on the top of the desk, where it winked and blinked in the most comical manner.

Muldoon hung around all the morning waiting for some of the words of wisdom that were reported to fall from its lips.

Not one dropped out, however, and Muldoon was getting disgusted.

Mr. Growler looked at the bird, remarked that it was a fine one, and said no more.

Burns asked Muldoon where he got that magnificent stuffed bird, and seemed quite astonished when told that it was alive and was a North Pole parrot.

Edward Geoghegan wanted to know if Muldoon had bought it for its good looks or won it in a raffle, and what he meant to do with it, now that he had it.

"Kape it, av coorse," said Muldoon.

"It's a very fine parrot that is."

"Parrot!" echoed Mr. Geoghegan.

"Certainly."

"Can it talk?"

"It hasn't done so yet, but it's been doin' a heap av thinking, and when it do spake yez'll hear something to astonish yez."

"So yer will," said the walking delegate, and Muldoon couldn't tell whether he was being laughed at or not.

In the afternoon Mrs. Muldoon came into the office, saw the bird, and asked:

"For why did yez get the stuffed owl, Terry? For the libry? It'll look foine up over the dure."

"It's not stuffed at all, me Irish linnet—it's alive."

"And phat did yez want av a live owl? Faix, yes can't ate it."

"It's not an owl at all, Bedalia, it's a parrot—a rare North Pole parrot."

Mrs. Muldoon laughed, turned up her nose, and said:

"That's no more a Poll parrot than I am, Terrence Muldoon. It's an owl."

"I tell yez it's a parrot."

"And I say it's an owl."

"Phat do ye know about ornipathology, Mrs. M.?"

"Nothing at all, Terrence Muldoon, but I know all about birruds, and I tell yez that's an owl."

"And I tell ye that it's a parrot."

"Has he talked yet?"

"No, he doesn't say much, but when he do spake, ye'll be surprised."

"What sort av birrud is that up on the desk, William?" asked Mrs. Muldoon.

"Why, dat's a Poll parrot, dat's wot it is," said the red-headed servitor.

"Didn't I tell ye so?" exclaimed Muldoon. "Maybe ye'd like to ax some wan ilse about it?"

"It's all a pack av fools ye are," snapped the lady. "That's no more a parrot than a cat is a Billy goat, but ye are all so full yez don't know phwat it is."

Then she sailed away in high dudgeon, and Muldoon began to talk to the owl to see if he could get it to talk back.

"Pretty Polly, nice Poll, Polly want a cracker?" he remarked.

doon, "and I want to find out what language he spakes. Say something to it."

"Oh, this is too much, you to make fool of me endeavor!" and away went Frills, dress suit and all, in a state of great indignation.

Then in came the Honorable Mike, and Muldoon asked:

"Tell me, Mike, widout a worrud av joke, phwat sort av a birrud that is beyant?"

"I'm a good little Georgy Wash, and I can tell a lie, but I won't," answered Mr. Growler. "I'm givin' it to yer straight, Mul. That's an owl, an' up in der country it's worth about fifty cents."

"I've been swindled, be heavens," muttered the landlord, "and Bedalia was right."



In two shakes those blacked up Micks were as white as snow. There was a great scattering, too, when the flour struck them. "Oh, be heavens, I'm shot!" yelled Muldoon, dancing up and down. "Phwat wor that?" howled Dan, digging at his eyes.

"I think yez will," answered the lady, with a burst of scornful laughter. "It would surprise me very much to hear an owl say anything."

"But I tell yez it's not an owl, it's a North Pole parrot, and very rare."

"Who tould ye so?"

"The man I bot him of."

"How much did ye give?"

"Five dollars. He wanted ten."

"He's in four dollars then. Sure, that's the commonest kind av a white owl."

Just at that moment Roger came along. "What sort av birrud is that, me bye?" asked Muldoon.

"Why, it's a parrot of course. Can't you tell that?"

Muldoon was triumphant, his wife puzzled.

"How can yez say that, Roger?" she asked. "It's an owl."

"Oh, no, you're mistaken, ma, it's a parrot."

"The bye knows phwat it is as well as I do," cried Muldoon. "Av coorse it's a parrot."

Nibbsey now appeared, having been posted by Roger.

The bird just winked at him and said nothing.

"Maybe it talks in North Pole or some av thim languages," mused Muldoon. "Be heavens, I niver thot to ax if it spoke English."

Muldoon did not speak anything else and so he was up a stump.

"I'll go and see if I can get a Dutchman, a Frinchman or an Italian to come and talk to it," he muttered as he went out.

Frills could speak all three, and Muldoon sent for that hightoned head waiter and explained matters.

"You think that is a parrot, Mr. Muldoon?" asked Frills.

"Av coorse it is."

"That is not the parrot, it is the owl, and he does not talk already, only to say 'Hoo!' You do not know the feather of the owl, the grand eyes which see in the dark and not in the light?"

"I've h'ard so, to be sure, but this is a parrot and not an owl at all."

"Ah, you make the weariness to me!" said Frills. "Some one has to you made humbug."

"I tell yez it's a parrot!" persisted Mul-

Wait till I foind Roger. It's him what put up the job on me. What'll I do wid an owl, I'd like to know. I don't kape a museum."

"Turn him in with the parrot," suggested Mike, "and let them fight it out. I'll put my money on the green."

"And that's on top ivery time, me bye," said Muldoon, with true patriotism.

The owl was left on top of the desk where he appeared to be doing no particular harm, and was forgotten for the time.

Muldoon went off to take a walk and find Roger, and the rest of the household went on with their regular occupations, the wise bird sitting, as before, on top of the desk.

Night came and nobody thought of the solemn-looking bird who now sat in the dark, the light on the desk being shaded so that he was in obscurity.

Time crept on, and at last everybody was in bed except Dan, Mike and Muldoon, who were enjoying a quiet little game of poker in the office.

Muldoon did not seem to have any great luck, and after having held a pair of deuces for three or four times successively, remarked petulantly:

"Phwat kind av a pack of cards is this, anyhow?"

"Hoodoo!" remarked a hoarse voice overhead.

"Faix, I think they are hoodooed for a fact, Mike. Yez spoke the truth that toime."

"I never said nothing at all," remarked Mike, who was dealing.

"Yis, yez did, yez said the cards wor hoodooed."

"Well, den, I did," answered Mike, who was looking over his hand, and did not care to discuss the matter.

"How many do you want, Mull?" he presently asked.

"To-who!" said a voice.

Mike dealt out the cards, when, to his surprise, Muldoon said, sourly:

"I axed ye for three cairds, me wistern frind, and yez only gav' me two."

"Two!" repeated the voice.

"No, sor, three," said Muldoon.

"What do yer want to keep sayin' two, then, if yer want three?" demanded Mike.

"I said three first off."

"Two!" said the voice.

"Ye're a loiar!" cried Muldoon. "I niver said two."

"To-who!" said Mike, apparently.

"Phwat's the matther wid yez, anyhow, Mike?" asked Dan. "Don't yez hear Terry say three. Phat makes yez kape conthra-dicting him all the time."

"I'm a silent old tombstone, and I never said nothing," retorted Mr. Growler.

"Dere's yer other card. You told me two and I give 'em to you. How many, Dan?"

"Two, too," said somebody.

"You want two, too, do yer. Well, dere they are."

"I said wan," replied Dan. "I niver said but wan?"

"Two!" said a deep voice.

This time Dan got mad.

"I think yez have got two on the brain, Mike Growler," he returned, angrily. "I said wan."

"Two!"

"I did not. I said wan."

"Two."

"For heaven's sake, Mike do be quiet and give the man his card!" cried Muldoon.

"What ails youse fellers?" growled the Nevada lily. "I'm a leather covered old census book, I am, and what's put down in me you can swear to. Youse fellers keep saying two and then say you don't."

"I said three."

"Two."

"And I said wan."

"Two."

Both Muldoon and Dan banged their fists on the table.

"Three!" yelled Muldoon.

"One!" howled Dan.

"To-who-two-two!" chuckled some one else, and a great fluttering was heard.

They were all on their feet by that time, all considerably frightened.

A big white object was seen dashing along the hall and up-stairs.

The Honorable Mike was the first to recover his equilibrium.

"Well, dat knocks me out!" he remarked. "There goes yer Esquimaux parrot, Mul."

"Oh, be heavens! it's the owl," muttered Muldoon. "Sure, I forgot all about him. It wor he that kept saying two all the time."

"No wondher we wor hoodooed," suggested Dan. "Well, I'm glad he's gon'. Let's go an wid the game."

An hour or two later Dan went up to bed, having been frozen out by Muldoon and Mike.

As he opened the door of his room, his sweet tempered wife sang out:

"What time is this to be coming up, Dan Muldoon?"

"Two?" came the answer, in thick tones.

"Two o'clock! Well, I never! You've been drinking. I can tell it by your voice."

"You, too?" was the answer.

"Me, too!" screamed the lady. "Aren't you ashamed of yourself to say that? Don't you dare to tell me I've been drinking."

"You too."

Mrs. Dan jumped out of bed, fired the astonished Dan out of the room, slammed the door and said through the keyhole:

"Say that again you drunken Irishman and you won't get in here all night."

"Faix, I haven't said a worrud to this blessed minyute," cried the astonished Dan, and he had not.

"Now, you've got to stay out!" snapped the angry female from within.

"Me too?" said a voice over Dan's head.

He looked up, saw something white over the door and took in the situation.

"Oh, begorry, it's the owl again! Faix, I had clean forgotten him. Hi, I say, let me in. It's all right. I niver said nothing. It's all a mistake. I haven't been drinking."

"It's you!" added the owl, or what sounded like it.

PART XXII.

"OH, it's me, is it?" snapped Dan's wife, through the keyhole. "You won't get in at all for saying that."

"I niver said it at all, it was the owl. Git on out av that, ye hoodoo baste, or I'll brake the head av yez."

This last was addressed to the owl, just above the chamber door, like that tiresome old raven we have heard of.

Mrs. Dan took the remark as addressed to herself.

"Oho, you will!" she yelled. "You'll break my head, will you? Not if I know it you won't."

"I wasn't talking to ye at all," cried Dan, disgusted. "I wor spaking to the owl. Get out av this, confound yez, or I'll pull yez to pieces."

That owl had already caused trouble enough that evening and Dan was soured on him.

Now he meant to get rid of him, and, yanking off his slipper, he let fly at the bird with it.

Whether his aim was bad or whether the weapon rebounded, we cannot say, but, at any rate, something dreadful happened.

The door suddenly opened and out flew Dan's wife.

She was just in time to get that slipper on the head.

Then there was a commotion, if there hadn't been one before.

Down she sat with all her might, and began to howl, while the bird, thinking it had raised disturbance enough in that part of the house, flew away.

Up came Muldoon, Mike, Mr. Burns, the poet, Nibbsey, Edward Geoghegan, Major Buster, Wash and two or three other people.

Nibbsey grabbed a broom from a corner, where a chambermaid had left it, and made a swipe at the owl.

Instead of hitting the bird he cracked the major, and that irate Southern gentleman and soldier began to talk very large.

"Oh, Gee! I swiped old Brass Buttons!" cried the youth, who had a name for everybody other than their own.

"Phwat's all the n'ise about?" demanded Muldoon.

"Dat Irish parrot of yours has got loose agin, and is stirring up a racket, I reckon," said Mike.

Such appeared to be the case, and a jolly racket it was, too.

However, in the fracas the owl banged against a window pane, smashed it into several bits, and flew away.

Matters were explained to Dan's wife, who had fled upon the approach of strangers, and Muldoon's brother was allowed to enter his own apartments.

The owl was gone at last, and there was no more trouble that night.

The next day, however, one of the neighbors complained that the bird had roosted outside one of his windows, and had scared the servant into a fit by its hooting.

"She thought she was going to die, and now she's left, and I can't get another girl, and I want satisfaction," the man said.

"Take it out of the owl, then," advised Muldoon, and that was all the satisfaction the man got.

Then somebody else complained that the creature had smashed his windows and wanted to be reimbursed for the damage caused.

"Faix, I'm hoodooed be that owl," muttered Muldoon, "but I won't pay a cent,

be heavens, and av yez want to sue ye can and be blowed to yez."

He didn't pay a cent either, and the man did not sue, but the next time that blundering owl came around he got knocked over with an ax, and now he occupies a position over the bar of a beer parlor somewhere on one of the avenues above Forty-something street, and if you want to see him you have my full permission, but be sure and pay for your refreshment when you go there, or you will get bounced.

A day or so after the final disappearance of the owl, Muldoon and Mr. Growler went out for a walk, leaving Dan to look after the interests of the hotel.

That giddy youth, Nibbsey, had got over his habit of putting people into the wrong rooms, and Dan had acquired better business habits than in former times, and so Muldoon had more leisure than at first.

"Where shall we go, Mike?" asked Muldoon, when they had proceeded the length of a city block.

"To get a ball," suggested Mr. Growler. "I'm an old hoghead in a dry season what ain't had nuthin' in for weeks, I am, and I'm as dry as a bloomin' chip."

"It's chronic wid yez," retorted Muldoon, "but I don't mind standin' yez wan disinfectant."

They did not stop more than four times in the next six blocks, and then they met Roger.

That young gentleman was about to enter an establishment devoted to physical culture, when they met him.

"Hallo, Roger, where are yez goin'?" asked Muldoon.

"In here. Won't you come in? I'm just going to take my lesson."

"In phwat, may I ax? Ye play the pianny now and the flute, and ye've gone through a full coorse av Frinch and German, till I don't know phwat ye're saying at all, and yez have had boxing lessons till yez can lick Sullivan—in yer mind—and yez have had lessons in dancing till yez can spin like a top, and now, be heavens, here's something else. Phwat is it?"

"Gymnastics, pop, that's all. This is a gymnasium. Didn't you know I went?"

"Oh, yes, now I do remember it. I used to be putty good at that meself."

"Come on in wid him, Mul, and let's do stunts," said the Honorable Mike. "Bet yer I can jump higher than you kin."

"Faix, you cannot then."

"Ah, go 'way, I'm an old flip-flop turner I am, with spangled drawers and a green clout and I can kick spots out o' der moon. When I do them stumps, you'll be out o' sight."

Roger scented a snap just about here and he said:

"Come on, pop, and try your muscles. You can knock that old stuff out every time."

"Look here, young feller," said the Honorable Mike, "I don't mind bein' called a bad man and a galoot, and a no good, nor a la-la, nor a duffer, nor any o' dem things, but I draw der line at 'old stuffs, see, and I can lick my heft in grizzlies."

"Come on, sir, and show what yez can do," interrupted Muldoon. "Talk is cheap, but actions is legal tendher and weigh heavy, be heavens!"

"Yes, come ahead," said Roger. "It won't cost you anything. You are my guests."

"I guessed so," said Mike.

"Av yez go to gettin' aff annything like thot whin ye get inside, me Nevada onion," said Muldoon, "ye'll have the roof fallin' an yez before yez know it."

In they went, Roger introducing them to the boss of the place, and then going off to change his clothes.

He presently reappeared in tights and trunks, and did a few simple things on the bars and rings just to get limbered up.

"Dat ain't nuthin'—dat ain't!" snorted Mr. Growler. "I can do them things myself. Show us something harder, young feller."

Then Roger did some more difficult feats, and Mr. Growler did not have much to say.

"That's putty good, Roger," said Muldoon, "but phwat's the wire over there for and phy don't they tighten it up?"

"That's the slack wire, pop, and the

boys walk on it. There's one of them now."

A young fellow in tights had just started from one end of the wire, which was suspended about ten feet from the floor, and was now walking along it with apparently the greatest ease in life.

"It seemed as easy as walking on the floor, and Muldoon did not sense the fact that the young fellow was a professional and came here to practice.

"That's aisy," the Solid Man remarked in an unguarded moment.

"Let's see you do it then," said Mike. "You'd go flop on your noddle in two shakes."

him over he'd make out to fall some way or another."

"We'll see if I will thin, me breezy frind," retorted Muldoon, kicking off his boots and dispensing with his two coats, his hat and his vest.

Mike came up closer to the wire to witness Muldoon's fiasco, for he was sure that there would be one.

The solid man walked up a ladder till he reached the point where the wire started.

He balanced himself for an instant, and then started off with that full confidence which ignorance of what is ahead always gives one.

It did look easy enough to walk the wire,

around, Muldoon was just getting upon his feet.

"Who's goin' to pay for that hat?" he asked.

"I have nothing to do wid that," retorted Muldoon. "Nothing was said about hats in the bet."

"Well, yer lost, just as I said yer would, and you owe me five cases and a new hat."

"I owe yez nothing av the sort."

"Well, I'm sayin' yer do, and don't yer forget it. It'll cost yer ten plunks to buy me a hat like that."

"Yes, it will—not. There was no hat in it. Besides, didn't I walk the wire?"

"No, yer didn't. Yer fell off like a reg'lar gilly, that's what yer did."



He grabbed the hat of the Nevada Lily and smashed it down over that gentleman's eyes. Mike sputtered and howled and tried to get away, but Muldoon had a good grip and kept it.

Muldoon was not going to stand any such imputations as those, if he knew it.

"Go on!" he retorted. "It's aisy, I tell yez. Av coorse, I can do it."

"To be sure you can, dad," put in Roger, fanning the flame. "It's as easy as eating mush."

"To be sure it is. I know how simple it is, me bye."

"I'm an old settler, I am, and wot I says I backs up," muttered the gentleman from Nevada, "and I bet yer five dollars yer can't walk from one end o' that wire to the other without fallin' off."

"Go on, pop, take him up; you've got a cinch," whispered Roger. "You'll win that five easy."

"I'll bet yez I can, then," said Muldoon, "and I don't need no tights nayther."

Roger gave the fellow on the wire the tip, and he came down on the floor to see the fun.

"Here's a pair of shoes, pop," said Roger. "Your boots are too stiff. You don't mind the shoes, do you, Mike?"

"Mind nuthin'!" retorted Mr. Growler. "That old jay can't do that stunt if you give him everything. If you was to carry

to be sure, and that's where Muldoon got fooled.

He started off with a spurt, went about four feet, and then began to sway forward and back.

He tried balancing himself by throwing out his arms, but he overdid the business.

He felt himself falling, and gripping the wire desperately with his toes, he clutched frantically at the air.

He got more than that, however, for he grabbed the hat of the Nevada lily and smashed it down over that gentleman's eyes.

Mike sputtered and howled and tried to get away but Muldoon had a good grip and kept it.

The fellows in that gymnasium had lots of fun, but Mr. Growler couldn't see it.

He made a break, and poor Muldoon was yanked from the wire in a jiffy.

Fortunately two fellows caught him and he was not hurt, but Mr. Growler was badly used up.

That hat of his was only good for stuffing into a broken sash after that and his hair and neck had been pretty well cleaned in the bargain.

When he got out of his hat and looked

"Did you see me fall off?"

"No, I didn't, but I know yer did all the same."

"Yez have got to prove that I did before yez get the money," said Muldoon.

The Honorable Mike turned to Roger and the rest and said:

"I'll ask anny of youse fellers, no foolin' now, if he didn't fall off before he got half way across?"

"Of coorse not. You must be dreamin'," said the wire-walker.

"You're trying to crawl, Mike," said Roger. "You slipped and fell."

"Of coorse he walked it," said two or three others, in chorus.

It looked very much like a put-up job on Mr. Mike Growler.

The man from Nevada evidently thought so, for he stuck his damaged hat on one side of his head, hoisted up one shoulder, thrust the opposite hand in his pocket, looked very tough and said:

"Well, I say he didn't walk it, see, and if the whole lot of you said he did, I wouldn't believe yer. I'm a sweet little innercent I am, and yer can make me believe salt is sugar, but you can't make me swaller no such gags as that."

"Do yez want me to try it over agin, Mike?" asked Muldoon.

The Honorable Mr. Growler of Nevada was very decided in his objections.

"No, sir, I don't," he warbled. "I got one dose and I don't want no more. If I stood at der oder end of der hall you'd manage to fall on top of me somehow. No, sir, yer needn't try it over again."

"Thin yez acknowledge that I done it?"

"Ah, yes, yer did—in yer mind! Yer couldn't a chalk him without steppin' over it and yer can't tell me yer walked dat wire."

"Oh yes, he did!" said everybody at once.

Mr. Growler cocked his hat over to the other side of his head, took his hand out of his pocket, peeled off his coat far enough to show his striped shirt sleeves and remarked:

"I can lick der hull crowd of yer, if yer are in a gymnasium, and I'll take yer all together or one at a time—see?—and knock yer all out! I'm a bad man, I am!"

"Oh, yes, we know you!" said the gang all together.

"Put on yer coat, Mike," advised Muldoon, getting into his own. "I have no desire to take ye to the hotel in a hearse, and that's phwat I'd have to do if the crowd took yez up."

The honorable Mike knew just how much bluster to put on, however, and he gave a contemptuous look to the crowd as he sauntered off, saying:

"Dere ain't one of yer I can't lick, but I ain't going to muss me collar just for nuthin'. They ain't no glory in it."

"Come on, Mike," said Muldoon. "Show thim some av those stunts ye used to do whin yez wor a bye."

"Show nuthin'!" snarled the Nevada lily. "I'm goin' home."

"Well, I'll have to go wid yez, thin, to see that yez don't get into anny more trouble."

When they got outside Muldoon remarked:

"Do yez know what I think, Mike?"

"Didn't know yer ever did think," returned the Western statesman. "Yer don't look as if yer did."

"I think that we've both been med fools av be Roger and the gang."

"You know you never walked that there wire, Mul," said Mike.

"Av coorse I didn't. That wor a gag. I thot I could do it, but I med a most lamentable failure av it, be heavens."

"Then you owe me five cases and the price of a hat."

"I admit the five, Mike, but there was nothin' said about a hat in the contract."

"Well, come and blow me off, den, and I won't say nuthin'."

It was very breezy after that, for both of them were blown off several times.

When they turned their steps homeward their walk was very wobbly to put it mildly.

The sidewalk was not half wide enough for either of them, to say nothing of both together.

"Why don't yer walk straight, Mul?" asked Mike, making a lunge that nearly sent Muldoon into the gutter.

"It's not me, it's ye," and Muldoon planked Mike up against the front of a house at his next step.

"If you gotter slip like that, why don't you wear rubbers?"

Then Mr. Growler pasted Muldoon up to a lamp-post.

If the post had not been there, Muldoon would have sat on the walk.

"Ye're a rubber yerself," said Muldoon, pushing Mike against an iron fence. "Ye're allus rubbin' up agin me."

They reached the hotel at last, and all hands tumbled to them.

"Get onto der boss and ole Gasbags," said Nibbsey. "A hull avener wouldn't be wide enough for dem."

"Mike must have been playin' football wid that hat av his," said Dan.

"It reminds me of a passage in my poem," remarked Mr. Burns, who happened to have a day off.

"Never mind that fake poetry, old Skeletons," said Nibbsey, "just get onto this."

The youth took a reef in his suspenders, turned up the cuffs of his jumper, took a few steps and let her go.

"When the moon was shining bright,
And the roses in the garden was in bloom;
That's where I met my dandy, my pretty, little
Louise.

She told me that she loved me and I believe it for
my mother told me so.
She's my sweetheart, I'm her beau,
She's my Annie, I'm—"

"Front!" bawled Muldoon, sitting on a bench.

Such a combination as the one Nibbsey was getting off was enough to sober anyone.

"Yes, sir," replied the bell boy, with great suddenness.

"Go get me a pitcher av wather and forget to bring it back."

"All right, boss," and that boy's red head twinkled through the hall until he was lost to sight.

"I was about to say," remarked Mr. Burns, "that your appearance, as you entered this humble domicile, reminded me of some lines of my own. I will repeat them:

"Through the dim abyssmal arches,
Of the woods, resplendant, gorgeous,
Came the sumptuous, ever youthful
Maiden, Gloriana, clad in all her
Pristine beauty, but with steps
Erratic, wandering, just as if she
Knew not rightly to where she
Wished to plant her foot next, as if
Overcome by liquor, tangled were
Her footsteps dainty, overcome by—"

"Niver mind Gloriana and the tangle-foot," said Muldoon. "That kind av poetry wud dhrove a man to drink."

"It's slippery out, and Mul didn't have his rubbers," explained Mr. Growler. "You mustn't mind a little thing like that. I never slip upon the sidewalk, I don't."

"No, yez do not," said Muldoon, "but sometimes the sidewalk gets drunk and comes up and hits ye in the back av the neck. That's the way, I suppose."

"Ah, you go take a walk," grunted Mr. Growler.

Muldoon did take one the next day, and Mike went with him.

It had snowed during the night and again that morning.

Between times Nibbsey and some other boys had made what they called a sliding-pond on the pavement in front of the house.

This slide, as slippery as glass, was now covered with a thin garment of snow.

Muldoon had taken not more than half a dozen steps when he struck this slide and suddenly sat down.

The Honorable Mike glanced down at him in scorn and derision.

"What's der matter wid yer, Mul?" he asked, striking out his arms, elevating his nose and putting on no end of lugs. "Why can't yer keep yer feet? I never fall down, I don't."

Perhaps Mr. Growler was just a little bit too previous in his eulogistic remarks concerning his ability to preserve his equilibrium.

PART XXIII.

THE Honorable Mike did speak a little too sudden, for a fact.

Muldoon had arisen, brushed the snow off the seat of his trousers and resumed his walk when suddenly something happened.

Mr. Growler had stepped on the slipperiest part of the icy walk, over which the snow had thrown a mantle to hide the treacherous spot.

Gymnastic gyrations, giddy genuflections, exceeding even Muldoon's funambulist flirtation, followed this act.

Flop!

You could hardly say that Mr. Growler sat down.

He did so many things before and after performing the sedentary act that it would be difficult to say when or how he did it, even if he did.

The first thing he did was to perform a series of high kicking acts that would have made the fortune of any artist in that line.

He kicked off his own hat, and sent it flying on top of a lamp-post twenty feet away.

Then he whacked the back of his head with his other foot, and turned a flip-flap, sat down, slid four feet and a half, and finally fetched up on his back with his ulster tail tied around his head.

Muldoon stuck his cane under one arm, put on his eye-glasses, and looked down upon the prostrate lily of Nevada with a pitying glance.

"Is that ye, Mike?" he asked. "I'm not sure, bekase I undershtood ye to say that ye niver slipped up on the ice."

"Go to thunder!" rejoined Mike, as he threw the coat tails off his head and struggled to a sitting posture.

"Yez mean to say that ye niver could stand on the ice, I persume?" continued Muldoon.

"If yer kept any sort of a decent hotel, instead of a common old hash house, yer'd see dat der sidewalk was cleaned off every time it snowed," ejaculated the disgruntled statesman, "but yer don't care nuthin' fur style, yer don't."

"Faix I do thin," snapped Muldoon, "and I'll have the fault remedied at wanst."

Then he sailed back into the hotel, called up Wash, Nibbsey, Dan, Frills, and the chamber maids and gave them all a going over.

"It's disgraceful, be heavens, that I can't have a decent sidewalk in front av me hotel," he began. "I fell down and so did Mr. Growler, and right in front av me own dure, and the nixt thing I know somebody will be coming along and break their necks, and thin I'll have to pay for thim."

"Nobody never told me to scrub off der walk, boss," said Nibbsey.

"Well, they should, thin, av yez haven't sinse enough to do it widout bein' tould, ye red headed son av a biled lobster. Why didn't yez see to it, Dan, av ye wor at the desk?"

Then Mrs. Dan got her back up, and retorted in her most peppery style:

"It ain't my husband's place to clean off the walks, you bald-headed old chimpanzee and I'll just thank you to mind your own business. If you looked after things yourself and not make other folks do your work you might have reason to complain, you old gorilla, but you don't, and—"

"Wow-wow!" exclaimed Muldoon.

"How did that thing get in here, and who's pullin' the string av it. Av that belongs to ye, Dan. Yez had better take it away where it won't get moth aten."

"Faix, I niver thought av the walk, Terry," said Dan, while his wife sat on a settee to cool off. "Sure that's the porter's work anyhow."

"Ah don't need no Fishman to tol' me wha' mah wo'k am," sputtered Wash. "Jus' yo' ten' to yo' own affaihs, sah, an' I ten' to mah wo'k m'se'f."

"Howld yer jaw, ye African ape, and don't give no lip," said Muldoon. "Go eout there at wanst, ye and the bye, and clane aff the walk, and don't let me have no more funny business about it, or I'll give yez all the sack, be heavens!"

When Terrence spoke like that, it meant business, and no more was said.

"Gee! but wasn't the boss mad?" remarked Nibbsey, when he and Wash were removing the ice and snow from the pavement.

"I jus' let dat no good Fish Mick know he can't talk to me lak dat many mo' times," sputtered Wash. "I jus' gib him sumpin' he won't lak, I tol' yo' dat."

"Give him not'n' Bonesy," replied the boy with the old gold head. "What de boss says goes, see? You won't open yer face to him, and I'm givin' it to yer straight."

"Yo'm no good," snorted Wash. "If yo' was any good yo' wouldn't take no sech back talk lak dat."

"Ah, go sit on a spike, good-lookin', and get sense," snorted Nibbsey. "Dere ain't no lies on de boss, an' when he gits mad he's got a right to be an' no nigger like you is goin' ter say he hasn't."

"Don' yo' call me a niggah, boy, or I swat yo' ober yo' red haid," and Wash raised his shovel threateningly.

Swat!

He got a biff on the side of the cocoanut with that snow-filled broom of Nibbsey's that caused him to set down and feel very tired.

"Gee! Would yer look at de coon, how easy he sits down!" chuckled the undaunted hall boy as he did some vigorous sweeping. "Did yer hurt anything, Handsome?"

Wash did not fool with Nibbsey any

more after that and the walk was soon as neat and clean as a new pin.

It was the next day, or the next after that, that Muldoon set out for a walk, accompanied by Mr. Growler.

It was a windy day, quite windy in fact, and Muldoon had not taken six steps before his hat blew off.

He made a wild grab at the runaway dicer, and in so doing, sent Mike's hat flying after his own.

"Hould on, shtop!" yelled Muldoon, making a dash for his hat, which was rolling like a wheel in front of him.

He did not think a word about Mr. Growler's plug, but only of his own, and the result was that in jumping forward

"Sure, the wind did that fur yer hat and yez wor not satisfied."

Presently they came to a place where a building was going up, and where a ladder stretched from the curb up to the second or third story.

To go around the ladder would necessitate stepping in a lot of mud, mortar and water.

Muldoon, therefore, walked under the ladder instead of going around it.

The Honorable Mike regarded this proceeding on the part of Muldoon with little less than horror.

"Dat settles it!" he said, positively, hanging back, "I'm goin' back to der ranch."

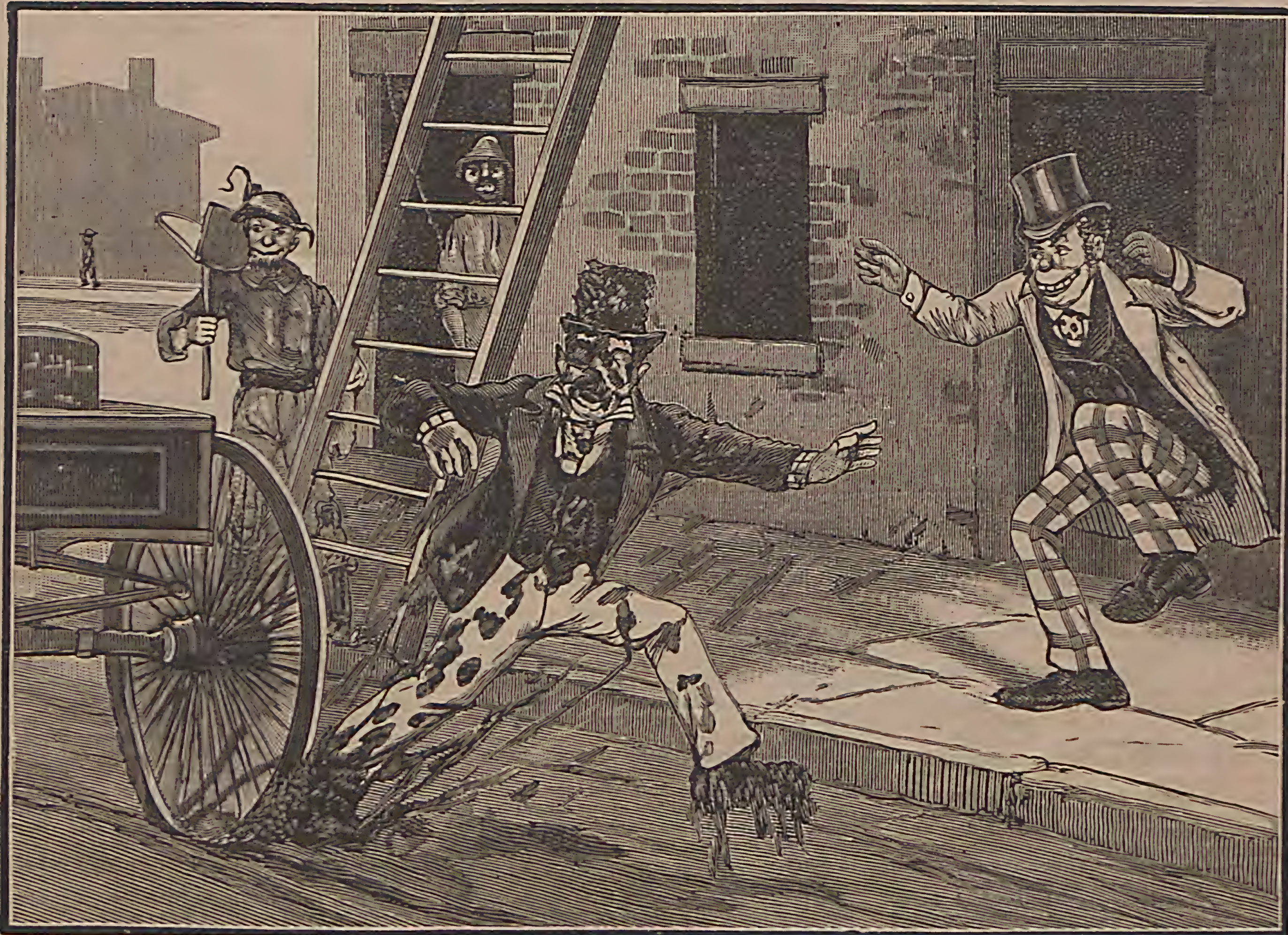
"The devil fly away wid ye and yer ould woman's notions," laughed Muldoon. "Come on an' take something."

Mike consented, but he did not go under that ladder, you bet.

Instead he went into the street, got his boots covered with mud, had a wagon splash him from his collar to his heels as it went dashing by, and got jawed by an old woman for getting in her way.

"Next time yez'll go undher the ladder, I'm thinkin', and save yerself all that throuble," remarked Muldoon with a chuckle.

Mike said nothing, possibly for the reason that he could not do the subject justice, and the two pards proceeded.



He went into the street, got his boots covered with mud, had a wagon splash him from his collar to his heels as it went dashing by, and got jawed by an old woman for getting in her way.

suddenly to secure his, he set his big foot square on top of Mike's.

"Well, you're der rockiest kind of a chump I ever see, Mul," muttered Mr. Growler. "Couldn't yer see where yer was goin'? What sort of a hat do yer call dat now?"

"It's a crush hat, be heavens, and yez can go to the operry or a ball wid it," laughed Muldoon, wiping off his own hat and putting it securely on his head.

"I wouldn't 've minded it if I'd had any fun wid der hat," sputtered Mike, "but I hain't. It's a new one."

"Go and have it blocked and ironed and it'll be as good as new, Mike. Luck at me. I always luck as if I had a new hat, but I haven't bot wan in five years."

"Dat's all right. You kin afford to get yer hat smashed. You've got der rocks and I haven't, and I can't afford ter wear an old hat."

"When I forst knew yer, wan hat did yez for winther and summer, and thin around agin, and it'll do the same neow. Come on, ye mountain lily, and niver moind yer hat. It's not hurted so bad."

"Come and blow me off, thin," the lily responded.

"What ails yez?" asked Muldoon turning around.

"Do yer know wot yer did, dat time?"

"Phwat wor it?"

"Yer walked under der ladder, dat's wot yer did."

"Faix, I couldn't wock over it, me excited frind."

"Couldn't yer go around it den, yer bloommin' jay?"

"Yis, and git mud and morthar on me boots. I guess not."

"Well, I'm goin' ter sneak and dat's straight."

"What fur?" asked Muldoon in astonishment.

"Yer've hoodooed me, dat's fur what."

"How could I?"

"By walkin' under dat ladder. You're all right yourself, 'cause you've got der deuce and all of luck, and it'll be me wot's queered, if I don't skip."

"Ah, come an, ye superstitious gawk," muttered Muldoon in disgust. "Faix, I've walked under ladders twinty times an' nothin' iver happened to me."

"Dat's all right," growled Mike. "Der won't nuthin' happen to you, but I'll get der hoodoo and don't yer forget it."

They presently struck a gilded saloon, as it were, and entered.

Muldoon was about to call for something, when he was recognized by a man at the bar.

"Hello, Muldoon, come up and shake," the latter cried. "Who's with you, Mike Growler? Fetch him up, too."

"Have anny av yez thrun yet?" asked Muldoon, cautiously.

"Yes, you've got ten to beat."

"Here's where I do it, thin," and Muldoon took up the box, rattled the dice and rolled out sixteen.

Some one else threw seventeen, and one man got six.

Mr. Growler admitted to himself that he had a pudding when he took up that box.

He gave it a shake, tipped it over, and out rolled the three cubes of bone.

Two of them showed an ace on top, the other was a deuce.

Four was all that the honorable Mike had to his credit.

"Ye're stuck, Mike," said Muldoon.

"Dat's all right," blurted out the statesman, "but I won't be stuck agin. I'm der king pin dice rattler, I am, and I generally sweeps in der hull pot. Let her go again."

Mike started the ball rolling this time and threw fourteen.

"Is ain't often too cold a day for der lily of Nevada ter blossom," he remarked as he passed along the box.

Muldoon got eighteen this time, the third man threw sixteen, somebody else got fifteen, and the other tied with Mike. "Throw off the tie with Skatesy, Mike," suggested somebody.

Mr. Growler took up the bones with a confident air and shook them out.

He got seven.

"Never mind dat, der other fellow may get on'y six," he remarked.

The other fellow caught nine.

Mr. Growler was in a hole again.

After an interval the cubes were again agitated.

Mr. Growler was low man again, getting six, while the others took from fifteen up to the top notch.

"Dis ain't my lucky day," he growled as he paid for the refreshments. "Come on, Mul, old sport."

They went out, and just as they got out, a swinging sign over the door broke away from its moorings on account of the wind and fell on Mr. Growler's head.

He was not hurt and the sign was not a big one, but he was disgusted.

"Well, dat settles it," he muttered as he straightened out his hat. "I'm goin' straight home."

"Ah, what's the matther wid yez at all?" muttered Muldoon.

"I ain't no gray-headed old fortune-teller and I can't read dreams nor nuthin' of that sort," retorted Mike. "but I can tell wot'll happen if I stay out with you just as good as if I saw it. You've queered me, you have, and my luck's gone back on me."

"Go an wid yer ould woman's fancies, yer jay."

"I told yer dere'd be bad luck if yer walked under dat ladder. Fust I gets me hat busted, den I muddies me boots, and den I gets stuck three times, and after dat a sign falls on me. Somebody'll sneak a lead quarter on me and maybe a bunco steerer'll get hold o' me if I stay with you. I'm goin' home."

"Ah, come on, don't be foolish. I'll shtand the next round," said Muldoon.

Mr. Growler consented, and in so doing flew directly in the face of fate.

The first man he met in the refectory, which they next visited, was one to whom he owed five dollars, and the fellow wanted it very much and would have it.

Then he set them up as he said, got too little change, had a row with the gentleman behind the counter, and was threatened with ejection if he did not keep quiet.

He hauled Muldoon out of the place and started for home, but two seconds thereafter stepped on a broken coal-hole cover, slipped up, tore one trousers leg all up the side, and got kicked in the back by a near-sighted old party who was coming along in a hurry and did not see the obstruction.

After that you could not have hired him to continue with his old pard.

"I ain't no Chicago hog," he snorted. "I've got enough. If I stay with you I'll be going home in an ambulance and Mary Ann'll be a widder. Tell me which way yer a-goin, Mul, and I'll go the other. You've hoodooed me and I are got enough of it."

Muldoon had to go home alone, for Mike wouldn't have him along after all that had happened.

In fact, Mr. Growler's mishaps were not over, even if he did go home without Muldoon.

First, they happened to be emptying ash barrels when he reached Forty-Something street, and he was to the lee of them.

Before he knew it, he was covered from head to foot with fine ashes.

Then he hurried on, and, despite a man's warning, suddenly found a ton of coal dumped right over his feet.

He had less than half a block to go after that, but in the time necessary to cover that distance, he was braced by two bummers, who claimed to have known him in former days, and wanted a quarter apiece, had his toes stepped on by a clumsy hay-seeder, who had just arrived in town, and finally had his hat blown down a sewer by a gust of wind.

"I knowed I was queered der very minute Mul went under dat ladder," he muttered, as he hurried indoors, "and I was a wooden-headed old chump ever to go on with him after that."

"Say, Whiskers, dere was a man in here wid a club just now," said Nibbsey, coming forward, "and he says you owe him 'leven dollars and sixty cents fur fancy shirts, and if yer don't have de money in half an hour he'll tell everybody you're a dead beat."

"You go sit on yer own head and burn yerself," growled Mike.

"Say, get onto dis," said Nibbsey, executing some dance steps.

"Oh, she's my daisy, she's sweet as honey. She's a dandy, she's a dear, she makes me feel so queer."

Down where the daisies grow.
And to-morrow night, at half-past eight
Me and my pretty Louise—"

"Front!" bawled Dan Muldoon who happened to want that redheaded youth just then.

"All right, Irish," cried Nibbsey, skipping out.

"I knowed I was hoodooed," growled Mike, sitting down. "That young red-headed snoozer has to go and sing at me just as if I was a post and couldn't help meself. I s'pose Burns'll come in next and want ter unload a ton or so o' potry on me. Dat's right, I'm a foolish old jay, I am, and I ain't got no friends. Der next time Muldoon walks under a ladder I hope it'll fall on the sucker and kill him."

"You seem sad and weary, Mr. Growler," said the voice of Mr. Burns, the poet, in his ear. "There is a passage in my grand epic poem which I know will console you. Let me read it to you."

Without waiting to obtain the Honorable Mike's consent to this proposition, Mr. Burns proceeded to recite:

"Like some jovial, festive, hilarious, old
Rounder, too much liquid fire partaking,
And with sad remorse o'ertaking
On some debtor with his bills enormous
Sent in to him with demands imperative
For their immediate payment or the
Prison; so sat Glorianna, sad, dejected,
All broke up, as vulgarly we say it,
Head bowed down and shoes untied, like
Some tipsy wanderer home returning,
Or some careless—"

"I'm nobody's darlin', and dere don't a bloke in der hull world care a rap fur me," sputtered Mike, jumping up, "but I draw der line at having potry fired at me, and, in his wrath, Mr. Growler upset the bench on which Mr. Burns sat, knocked the manuscript out of the poet's hands and into a big stone spittoon, kicked the poet's hat clear into the street, and then swept like a cyclone up to his own apartments, where he remained incarcerated for the remainder of the day.

When Muldoon came home, and was told all that had happened, for Mike had confided his woes to Mary Ann, he laughed, and said:

"He's only an ould gawk for holdin' such notions, be heavens. Sure nothin' happened to me, but thin I wor born under a lucky star, and it's an inclement day when wan av the Muldoons gets hoodooed by annything."

Young Roger put his mind on a snap a few days after this, and gave his whole attention to it so that it would prove a success.

When Muldoon came down to breakfast on that particular morning, he found a big pasteboard box on the counter marked with his name.

"To Muldoon, on his birthday, from his many friends," it said on a big tag.

"There was two dollars and sixty-t'ree cents to collect on it," said Mike, "but the boy said he'd call again."

"Faix, that's a nice way to make a man a birthday prisent, make him pay the express charges."

"Maybe dere's silver knives an' forks in it, Mul," said Mike.

"Or a tay set av solid goold," suggested Dan. "Yez always wor lucky, Terry."

"Faix, I had forgotten it wor yer birthday, Muldoon, or I'd have given yer something meself," said Edward Geoghegan.

"I'm not sure if it is or not," muttered Muldoon, "I had an idee it wor the sivin-teenth."

"Just listen to the old stuff," snickered the Honorable Mike. "He thinks he's Saint Pat. Would yer listen to the gall of him."

"What's in de box, boss?" inquired Nibbsey. "It smells bully, whatever it is. Open it and let a feller see can't yer."

"Yes, open the box!" cried all the gang.

"Maybe it's diamonds."

"Or a case of wine."

"Oh, I know what it is."

"It's a bookay, dat's what it is."

"Well, I'm a dizzy old guesser, I am, but shoot me if ever I've thought of dat! Who's goin' to be fool enough to sind Muldoon flowers, I'd like to know?"

Just then, along came Roger.

"Hallo, pop," he said, looking at the box. "Got a birthday present, have you? That's good. What is it?"

"Be heavens I don't know, me bye, anny more thin ye."

"Well, it's an easy thing to find out," and Roger cut the string around the box and took off the cover.

"Oh, my! ain't that a daisy?" he exclaimed, holding up something.

Muldoon pressed forward but could see nothing.

"Tell you what, pop, that's fine, that is."

"Didn't think yer'd get such a handsome one as that, Terry."

"Dat does yer proud, Mul, only it's too good for yer, I think."

"Dem's la-las, boss, and don't you make no error."

Everybody seemed to be looking at something which Roger held in his hand and were all admiring it.

The young fellow turned his hand this way and that and held it up high for all to see, but Muldoon saw nothing.

The box was empty and Roger had nothing in his hands and yet the whole gang seemed to be admiring something.

"Phwat is it yez have?" asked Muldoon, breaking through the gang. "Yez all seem to be shtuck on something, but I can see nothing, be heavens. Phwat is it? A diamond ring?"

"Ah, you must be blind!" remarked Mike, "not ter see a big bokay, twice as big as yer own head, all made up of der dandiest kinds of flowers."

"Can't yer smell it, boss? tell yer wot, dat's a honeycooler, dat is."

"Isn't it fine, pop?" asked Roger. "You ought to be proud of that. Where shall I put it?"

"Be heavens, I think yez must all have gon' mad," sputtered Muldoon, "for divil a flower do I see or smell."

"Oh dear! the poor man is blind!"

PART XXIV.

"BLIND, is it?" cried Muldoon, indignantly. "Faix, thin, I'm not. It's yez that's paralyzed, the whole av yez."

"And ye mean ter say yer can't see dat bustin' big bunch of flowers wot der boy's holdin' up over yer head?" asked Mike.

"He's holdin' up nothin' and yez all know it."

"Oh, pop, how can you?"

"That's right, Mul, we're all liars, of course, and you're the on'y feller wot's tellin' der truth."

"Faix, the majority is agin yez, Terry, and av yez can't see the bokay, yez must be blind."

Muldoon began to think that perhaps there was something the matter with his eyes after all, and he gave them a good rubbing.

"I'm blowed av I can see annything yet," he muttered. "Where is it, Roger?"

"Why, right here in my hand," said the young scamp. "It's funny you can't see them."

"Give me one o' dem, boss?" asked Nibbsey, "I want ter give it to me girl."

"Begob, yez can have them all as far as I care," said Muldoon, "since I can't see annything."

"Ye're nuthin' but a mole, a reg'lar bat," declared the Honorable Mike. "It's mighty funny that yer can't see what all of us kin."

"Betther go and have yer eyes attended to, Terry," suggested Dan. "They must be failin' yez."

every time. Funny how time goes so slow when yer a-thinkin' of it, ain't it?"

"Well, I don't know. I can ginerally mark the minutes in their flight, me frind."

"Bet yer can't look straight up in der air fur five minutes, Mul, bet yer five cases yer can't, bet yer five plunks dat yer'll look down before tree minutes is up and t'ink der time is gone."

"Faix thin I can tell to a hair when the last minyute is gon', and if yez bet an that yez'll lose."

"No, I won't, and I'm a-tellin' yer so. Yer can't look up straight in de air fur five minnits."

"I can, faix."

slip out of his hands just for the sake of a pain in the neck.

"Oh, yis, now he's purtendin' to be pickin' me pockets, but he ain't, av coorse. I'm too fly for that. I won't look down till the time is up."

It certainly looked from Muldoon's point of observation, as if he would surely win the stakes.

PART XXV.

FINALLY, when it seemed as if his neck would crack in two, Muldoon put down his head.

"It's more'n foive minutes, Murty," he said, "and thim foive dollars—"

Mr. Murty Whalen heard the cry and acted accordingly.

He slipped into a doorway and let the gang go by.

He had no intention of swiping Muldoon's property, nor did he desire that the joke should land him in a station-house.

The crowd swept by him and then he turned and went the other way.

Just now a strange thing happened, although it might have been expected.

The crowd took Muldoon to be the thief. The latter thought that his tough friend must be close at hand and he dashed on at a furious pace.

"Stop thief!" howled the pursuers.

The new ones that heard and joined in



He suddenly made an alarming discovery. His watch and chain, his seals, his scarf pin, his loose change, and his pocket-book were gone. His pockets were turned inside out, and every one was to let.

"Bet yer five balls yer can't."

"I'll go yer."

"All right, tell me when yer ready," and Mr. Murty Whalen hauled out a big soaker of a gold watch and looked at it.

"I'm ready now thin. Phwat time is it?"

"Half-past ten. Are yer ready?"

"Yis."

"Let her go."

Up went Muldoon's nose in the air till all that you could see of him was his throat.

"Sure this is an ould thrick," he mused. "He's goin' to make eout to take me pin, so's to make me back down before the time, but I won't do it, be heavens."

The wary Terrence kept account of the seconds, and was not going to be fooled if he knew it.

He could presently feel the man fumbling at his watch chain, but he paid no attention to it whatever.

"Faix, I know it's only wan minyute yet," he thought, "and I'm not goin' to lose me bet av I know it."

There he stood, with his nose pointing straight toward the zenith, his hands at his sides.

He wasn't going to let that five dollars

Then he suddenly made an alarming discovery.

His watch and chain, his seals, his scarf pin, his loose change, and his pocket-book were gone!

His pockets were turned inside out, and every one was to let.

His boodle had been prigged, his watch was annexed, his pin swiped, and his loose change snatched.

Mr. Murty Whalen was seen just disappearing around the corner at full speed.

Muldoon realized the situation in just two shakes.

Mr. Whalen's little joke had turned out to be quite a serious affair to Muldoon.

The latter had won the five dollars, to be sure, but he had lost everything else.

"Stop thief!" he bawled, giving chase.

"I've been robbed, stop thief!"

"Stop thief!" howled an old man, who heard the cry and immediately bolted after Muldoon.

"Stop thief!" yelled everybody within hearing.

Around the corner flew Muldoon, and after him came three men, seven boys, four dogs and a tramp.

the chase saw Muldoon in the lead and naturally took him to be the culprit.

You can't raise a cry like that in the city of New York without creating a first class racket in ten seconds.

The street was full of people in a jiffy and all hands were yelling for all they were worth.

Muldoon suddenly stopped and looked around for Whalen.

Murty had disappeared and Muldoon could not account for it.

His stopping gave the gang time to come up.

The old man was the first to arrive and he instantly collared Muldoon.

"I've got him, here he is, don't let him get away here he is, I've got him!" he cried excitedly.

Then three or four came up and they all grabbed Muldoon.

"Here he is, don't let him go, we've got him," they all bawled.

Lastly, a blue coated copper appeared on scene.

He took in the situation, for being a copper, he had to take in something.

"What's der matter here?" he asked, for he was tough.

"This man is a thief!" cried the old man, pointing to Muldoon.

"Ye're a liar!" said Muldoon promptly.

"I was chasin' a thief, so I was."

"That's the man, officer."

"Don't let him get away."

"I know he's the feller."

"I saw him when he first ran."

"Take him in, officer."

Everybody had something to say.

The officer didn't puzzle his head over the affair two seconds.

Muldoon said he was not a thief and the old man said he was.

"You come with me," he said to Muldoon, "and you've got to come to make der charge," he said to the old man.

"Sure, iverybody knows me, I kape a hotel," said Muldoon.

The copper was new on the force, and had moved to the city from the wilds of Brooklyn.

Consequently he had never heard of Muldoon.

"Yer gotter come with me I tell yer," he remarked, "or I'll club the whole head off yer. None o' yer beefin' now, but come along, and you, too."

The old man objected, and said he had not seen the affair, and so could not make any charges.

"Yer gotter come with me, I tell yer!" said the copper.

Then he collared both Muldoon and the old man and lugged them off.

"I'll go wid yez," remarked Muldoon, "but let me tell yez, me foine mon, that it'll cost yez yer job whin the judge sees me."

At the nearest police station the sergeant recognized Muldoon, but thought he would have a little fun with him.

"What's all this?" he asked.

"The tarrier stole suthin' and this bloke saw him," said the tough copper.

"Are you ready to make the charge?" asked the sergeant of the old man.

"No, your honor, I have no charges to make. I did not see the theft committed. I heard some one cry 'Stop thief!' and saw this man running. I gave chase and captured him."

"Yer fat-headed chump!" muttered Muldoon. "It wor me that wor robbed, and me what gav' the foirst cry. Only for ye I'd have got the vilyan meself, for I know um well."

"The old man is an accomplice, sergeant," cried somebody in the crowd that had entered. "The other fellow passed the stolen goods to him."

"That's a lie, be heavens!" cried Muldoon, "and av the sucker phat said it comes out here, I'll break the face av um."

"Take that man to a cell," said the sergeant, indicating Muldoon.

"Begob, sergeant dear, yez knows me as well as yez knows anny wan," said Muldoon.

"Never saw you in my life," said the sergeant, with a sober face.

"Oh, glory! and it's manny a nip ye've had at my bar whin goin' yer rounds. Faix, I'm Muldoon, and av coorse yez know me."

"Take that man away," said the sergeant, severely, "and if he makes any fuss, handcuff him. Clear the room!"

The crowd was fired out, and then the sergeant said to the old man:

"You can go, sir, but you must come and make a charge against this man to-morrow morning."

"But, your honor, I have no charge to make. I really did not see the offense—"

"That will do," said the sergeant. "Come and make the charge or you will be locked up."

"But, your honor, how can I make any charges when—"

The sergeant winked at two of the men, and that old man was bounced out in quick time.

Turning to the officer who had made the arrest, the sergeant gave him a laying out, somewhat in this style:

"You are a fine man to make an arrest, aren't you? You're too green for a country policeman, you are. That's one of the richest men in the ward; keeps a hotel and is known all over. If you make any more arrests like that you'll get transferred. You can go out on your beat."

The tough cop felt rather flat at that, but

he could not say anything and had to light out.

The sergeant kept Muldoon in a cell for about three hours and then sent for him, dismissing everybody else, and said:

"Well, Mul, what joke is this? Who put it up?"

"Be heavens, it's no joke at all, sergeant," said Muldoon. "Murty Whalen, the heeler, got away wid all me property, and I wint afther him, and thin that stehupid ould gawk put the polis an me and had me took in. What sort av min do yez have on the foorce, sergeant, phat don't know Terrence Muldoon?"

"How did Murty Whalen happen to steal from you, Mul?" asked the sergeant.

The Solid Man related how he had been robbed.

"Well, you are a la-la, Mul," the officer remarked, with a hoarse laugh. "Murty doesn't intend to take your things, of course. How did you ever let yourself be taken in by as old a gag as that?"

"Faix, he said, I couldn't, and I knew I could," said Muldoon.

The sergeant laughed again, and then Muldoon asked:

"For why didn't yez know me whin I come in, sergeant?"

"Oh, just to keep up the joke," laughed the other. "I guess you'll find the things when you get home, and, by the way, Mul, I'll be around when I'm going home and take in that champagne supper you're going to put up on account of this racket."

"Ye'll be taken in yerself thin av yer expect to take annything of that soort. Divil a bottle will I set up."

"Oh, yes, you will, Mul. The boys will get the grand laugh on you if you don't."

Muldoon went home, and sure enough, found Murty Whalen talking to Mike, Dan, Edward Geoghegan, Burns and the Major.

He had evidently been telling the boys all about that little joke, for everybody laughed when Muldoon entered.

Then they all went for him.

"Can you look up in the air for five minutes, Muldoon?"

"Well, you are a nice feller to catch a thief, you are!"

"Got took in, didn't yer, Mul, yer dizzy dude?"

"You orter get killed fur bitin' at an old chestnut like that!"

Muldoon listened to all these remarks and then saw something resting in one of the pigeon holes of the safe.

It was his property which Murty Whalen had annexed.

He took possession of it and then said:

"Yez owe me foive dollars, won on a bet, Murty Whalen, and don't yer forget it."

"That's all right, Terry, old pal," said Murty Whalen, handing a fiver over to Muldoon, "but it'll cost yer more'n that ter set der fizz up fur der boys."

"I'll not open a single bottle that isn't ped for," said Muldoon doggedly.

He thought that he could keep this resolution, but he couldn't.

Everybody that came into the hotel during the rest of that day and the next had something to suggest about looking up in the air or chasing thieves or something of that sort.

Whenever Muldoon went out he heard similar remarks on all sides.

If he went into a refectory, he heard allusions to stargazers, et cetera, if he entered a car, some one had something to say about it and wherever he went he got it in the neck.

The newspapers had it, the variety theaters took it up, songs were written about it and Roger gave away the snap to my humble nibbs.

That settled it, and Terry had to set up the champagne for all hands before they would stop talking about it.

I haven't had mine yet and that's how I came to give the thing away.

It happened that Muldoon took another walk a few days later, and the Honorable Mike, Mr. Burns and Edward Geoghegan went with him.

Somehow or other, something always took place when Muldoon went out for a walk, and he ought to have been wise and kept in doors.

If he went alone he was generally all

right, but when he took Mr. Growler or any one else along he invariably got into trouble.

The gang now walked in squads, Muldoon and Mike in advance, and the poet and the walking delegate behind.

It was just after St. Patrick's day, and the Honorable Mike did not feel like smiling through a glass, having hardly recovered from the effects of the celebration, and for that reason Muldoon considered him a safe companion.

There were other dangers besides that of taking too much liquid refreshment, however, and they were waiting for that quartette of old pals.

Roger had seen them go out and he was prepared to give them a racket.

The four friends had not walked very far before a German band came out of a side street, headed the line and began to play.

"Faix, we have music," said Muldoon, not displeased.

Presently, however, he felt otherwise.

The band began playing the Rogues' March and attention was immediately called to the gang.

"Hould on, let them go ahead," said Muldoon, stopping.

The band stopped also, but went right on playing.

As it happened Muldoon had paused directly in front of a police station. The inference was obvious and the crowd that now gathered drew its own conclusions.

"Get onto the chain gang, fellers."

"Aint they a pretty lot of stuffs!"

"Where's the striped suits?"

"Oh, they're only waiting for them."

"How much are they going to get?"

"Oh, about three years apiece."

"Let's go the other way," growled Muldoon, wheeling about.

Mr. Burns, the poet and Edward Geoghegan now headed the procession, followed by Muldoon and Mike.

Next came the band, playing "We won't go Home till Morning" very loud.

"Get on to ther chowder party," said somebody.

"No, that's the Salvation Army on parade," said another man.

"No, it's the Knights of No-Work, on a toot," remarked a third.

Muldoon concluded that he had had about enough of this sort of thing.

He paused, turned around and thus addressed the leader of the band: "Phwat are yez folleyin' uz fur, ye big Dootchman? Can't yer shtand shtill, begob?"

"Vas you owned dem streeeds, mein friend?" asked the Dutchman. "I play me mein band wherefer I blease, ain't it."

"Well, yez don't want to folly me around and I won't have it."

"I blay mein band chust wherefer I likes, und you don't got nodings to say about dot. Go ahead mit der moosic once."

"Yez can play all night av yez likes," snorted Muldoon; "but I won't have yez follyin' me, and don't you forget it."

"Maybe you had better mind my own beezness myselluff once, don't it?" said the Dutchman.

Then the band began playing louder than ever to the tune of the "Watch on the Rhine."

"Come on," snorted Muldoon. "Yez can niver argy with a Dootchman."

He and his gang turned down a side street; but the band followed, playing "We've Both Been There Before."

Everybody came out to hear the music, and Muldoon was the center of attraction.

Kids swarmed around him, heads were thrust out of windows, boys came running from all points, and there was a small-sized mob in the neighborhood in a short time.

"Hi, Jimmy, come quick, sojers!"

"It's another St. Patrick's. Come on!"

"Naw, it's nuthin' but a Dutch band."

"With tarriers in it. Ah, go on!"

Mr. Mike Growler was mad, but not mad enough to slug the leader of the band.

The latter was a bigger man than Mike. The Nevada statesman could shoot off his mouth, however, and he did so.

"Look a here, boss, I'm a tough citizen from the backwoods, I am, and when I hits out wid my fist, trees fall down, see? You just want ter stop follerin', as I tell yer."

"Bad thing for a man at your age to lose his eyesight," asserted Edward Geoghegan.

"You ought not to read so much, late at night, Muldoon," advised Mr. Burns.

"It's a good thing that I am blind, be heavens, av I had to read yere potry, Hippocrates," returned Muldoon. "I'm spared that misfortune at laste."

"Don't you see them now, pop," said Roger, holding up his hand.

"No, I do not."

"See what?" asked Mrs. Muldoon who suddenly appeared. "What have yez there, Roger?"

The lady had not been posted or the gag might have been kept up on Muldoon for some time longer.

Glory comin' down der rocks has gotter do wid Muldoon and dat fake bokay."

"I was coming to that presently, if you had only waited," remarked Mr. Burns.

"To be continued in our next—world!" said Roger. "Do you ever expect to get that poem finished, Burns?"

"Mebbe he will if his friends don't kill him fust," said Edward Geoghegan, "and if they don't it will kill thim—if they got too much of it."

"Faix, I think it's very purty," said Mrs. Muldoon, "although I have not the laste idee phwat it's all about."

"You can say the same of a good deal of poetry besides what Burns makes, ma," laughed Roger.

"A bottle of my celebrated sugaring mixture will make a pound of sugar last ten times the usual time, one pound will suffice where it formerly took ten pounds, thus saving ninety per cent. in your bills, and giving one hundred times more satisfaction, and pleasing your guests forty times more than anything else you can buy."

"Buy this grand article, sir, and you will never buy anything else. Just try a leetle of it, sir. Samples free, and no charge for trying. Try before you buy, that is my motto. Try, buy, and you will die, die happy, of course."

The glib spoken young man now handed Muldoon a pellet as big as a pea, passing



"Oh, yis, now he's purtendin' to be pickin' me pockets, but he ain't, av coorse. I'm too fly for that. I won't look down till the time is up."

There was no use trying to fool Mrs. Muldoon, for she was not biting at any such snaps.

"Roger says he has a fine bokay in his hand, Bedalia," said Muldoon, "but I'm hanged av I can see it."

"Av coorse yez can't see it, ye great gawk, because there's none there," said the lady. "That's only another wan of the bye's jokes. Will yez niver learn sinse?"

Then all the gang broke out into a laugh, and Muldoon went away looking very sheepish.

"That reminds me of a verse of my poem," said Mr. Burns in a cautious tone, looking around.

He did not see any black looks on the faces about him, and so he proceeded:

"Down the rocks precipitous, majestic,
Piled in solemn grandeur, heavenward,
Slow of tread, deliberate, thoughtful, stately,
Looking nor to right nor left but straight
Ahead, down the jagged pathway slimy
'Twixt the horrid, awful, sonorous, sable
Echoing boulders, Glorianna—"

"Well, I'm an old sky-gazer wid a forty-foot spyglass, I am," interrupted Mike, "and I can see funder dan any one here, but yer kin shoot me if I kin see what old

Mr. Burns went away looking very sad, and Nibsey proposed to restore hilarity by giving that famous song and dance of his.

"If yer do yer'll get killed," muttered Mike, "and dere'll be a red-headed angel sneaking across der golden gutter to-morrer morning."

Nibsey concluded that perhaps it would not be wise to attempt doing what he had proposed, and as Muldoon called to him just then he did not get the opportunity.

Roger got up a better snap than the last one in the course of a day or so, and I shall have to tell you all about it.

A man came in while Muldoon was at the desk, and said very glibly.

"I want you to try my new patent sugaring compound, is better and lasts longer than sugar and gives more satisfaction, is recommended by all the royal families of Europe, the President of the United States and the cabinet, the Emperor of China, the Shah of Persia, and Khan of Tartary, the Sultan of Zanzibar, and the Grand Mogul of Zampillezorrer."

Before Muldoon could gasp out a reply that he didn't want any of the stuff, the drummer proceeded:

it between the arms of a dainty pair of sugar tongs.

Muldoon clapped the pill in his mouth and crushed it between his grinders.

"Troth, it's sugar," he said.

"No, sir, that's where you are mistaken, it is not sugar, although it tastes like it and looks like it, but in reality it is far superior to sugar, does not cost as much and lasts longer, at a saving of five hundred per cent on your bills. Try a sample bottle, sir, it will last you a week and in a few days our salesman will come around and take your orders. You are sure to buy fifty dollars worth if you buy a cent's worth. This sample will cost you one dollar and is worth one hundred in showing you how you can save in your—"

"Hould an, hould an, you'll talk me blind, be heavens!" cried Muldoon. "Why didn't yez hire out as a shouter in a dime museum? Sure, ye'd make yer fortune, so yez wud."

"Yes, sir, one dollar judiciously spent is worth fifty thrown carelessly around. Take this sample bottle, try it to-night, and you will please all your guests and be obliged to turn people away from your doors, or build a hotel five times the size of this. You

never spent a dollar more judiciously than you are going to spend this one, and I will—"

"Hould an; I'll try the stuff and if it's anny good I'll let yez know," interposed Muldoon, taking a dollar from his vest pocket and handing it over to the talking machine.

"Thank you, sir, a thousand times obliged. I like to come across a man of sense and discretion. This will be money in your pocket, sir, yes, sir, and you will be ten thousand times obliged to me for having introduced to your notice so valuable—"

"Yis, yis, but for Heaven's sake get out and call again next week, next year, next century, av yez like, but only get out. Troth, av yer mother had manny such talkers as ye I wondher she didn't go crazy."

The drummer collected the dollar, put a bottle wrapped up in blue paper on the counter and skipped out.

The aforesaid bottle had a wide mouth and a thin cork, and Muldoon presently slipped down the paper from about the neck, took out the cork and sampled the contents.

There were little white, frosty-looking cubes in the bottle and they certainly tasted decidedly like sugar to Muldoon's uncultivated taste.

"Begorry, I don't see any difference bechune this and sugar," he remarked, when he had eaten one or two cubes, "but it's very fine sugar, all the same. I'll try some of it to-night and see how it goes."

Presently the honorable Mike came in, saw Muldoon's jaws working and said:

"What's yer eatin', Mul? I s'pose yer couldn't pass it, could yer?"

"Help yerself, Mike, and tell me how yez like it."

Mike Growler crunched the cube between his teeth and remarked:

"Dat's purty good sugar, Mul. Dey ain't no sand nor chalk nor stuff in dat."

"Yer like it, thin? Take another bite, I'm thinkin' av buyin' some like it."

"Well, dere won't be no kick if yer do, Mul; der sugar you've been gettin' fur der house is better fer buildin' purposes dan fur sweetenin' coffee, you bet yer life. You got badly stuck on dat last ba'l."

Then came Dan Muldoon, who, seeing his friends eating something, wanted some of it.

He was supplied and pronounced the article very fine, and next came Nibbsey, Wash, Mr. Burns the poet, Major Buster, Edward Geoghegan and Rufus Jackson, the colored cook.

They all had sweet teeth and that bottle suffered considerably by their inroads.

"Faix, seeing that yez all like it so much," said Muldoon, "I think I betther buy a barrel av it when the mon comes around, but I hope he's not such a talker as the other wan, be heavens!"

Presently a mysterious-looking individual in a slouched hat, dirty shirt and rusty-looking suit, came in, walked up to the desk, and remarked:

"Sh! I am a detective!"

"Faix, av yez had said ye wor a tramp, I might have believed yez," said Muldoon.

"Your name is Muldoon?"

"It is."

"You are the proprietor of this hotel?"

"Yez have guessed rightly."

"Have you bought any sugaring compound of a glib-talking man within half an hour?"

"Are yez the salesman for the same?" asked Muldoon.

"If you have not bought any, don't do it," said the shabby man, mysteriously.

"Ha! I will let you into a secret."

"I know wot it is," cried Nibbsey. "You owe der barber a quarter."

"The proprietor and inventor of that sugaring compound is a crank, an escaped lunatic, a man who has registered a vow to kill all the hotel-keepers in New York. He claims to have been beggared by them, and this is his revenge."

Muldoon began to feel very nervous, and to finger that bottle of sugaring compound very gingerly.

Dan looked as if he had eaten something that did not quite agree with him, Nibbsey began to turn blue around the gills and white under the eyes, and the Hon. Mr. Growler's mustache drooped perceptibly.

"Phwat's the *modus operandi*, to spake

in French, av the man's methods?" asked Muldoon.

"He goes around purporting to be the inventor of a patent sugaring compound, which he sells to the different hotel keepers. This compound looks and tastes like sugar, but is in reality a—Ha, ha! Ho, ho! What have you in that bottle?"

The gang began to show signs of general disintegration.

The detective snatched the bottle from Muldoon's hand and held it up.

"Brown's Mudless Sugaring Compound," it said on the outside label.

The disciple of Old King Brady tore off the blue wrapper and revealed a big white label.

Any one could see what was on this at the distance of half a block.

A big black skull and two shin bones crossed below it, and the word POISON in apoplectic letters, running slap across the label.

"Ha, ha! It is even as I thought," cried the detective. "Gentlemen, have any of you eaten out of this bottle? Ha, ha! I am Slungshot, the deteckative. I never sleep or take a bath. I see that you have. Gentlemen, you are all poisoned!"

"Oh, murther! and I haven't got an me green suspenders! To think av dying wid red wans an, the hated British colors, be heavens!"

"Oh, glory! and I ped a bill av tin dollars this morning; how I wish I hadn't."

The rest of the gang did not say anything.

Nibbsey executed a few dance steps and sat down in a big stone spittoon, looking very sad and weary.

Rufus began to look for his razor and to turn coffee-colored, while Wash lay down on the floor and kicked.

The Honorable Mike put his watch, chain, seals, rings, pin and revolver in the safe and called for a big horn of whisky.

"If I gotter die I may as well go to glory happy," he remarked.

Mr. Burns began to recite poetry, the major went off and curled up in a chair, Edward Geoghegan opened a window, and in the meantime the detective departed.

You never saw a sicker looking gang than that one.

They wailed, they moaned, they howled, they twisted about and they looked very miserable.

"Sind for a docthor," said Muldoon, rushing to the telephone. "No matther av yez all die, I must be saved."

"Go get stomach-pumps for ten," said Edward Geoghegan sadly.

Mr. Growler was filling up on fire-water at the bar, and was beginning to feel happy.

"I don't care if I are a-going ter die," he remarked. "I'll be a reglar masher when I climb der golden stairs, with a ten-dollar breath on me and me pockets full o' sand. Whoop! who cares fur dis here weary world anyhow? Whoop! gimme t'ree more fingers ob der same, Charlie."

"Be heavens, a man that can get dhrunk whin he's going to die wud ixpect politeness av a polisman."

In the midst of the misery, down came Mrs. Dan Muldoon.

"What's all this row about?" she demanded in her sourest accents.

"We've all been pisoned!" said Dan.

"Terry did it. There's the bottle."

The lady grabbed the bottle, looked at it, smelled of it, tasted one of the cubes, threw one on the fire and then snorted:

"You're all a pack of fools. That's no more poison than I'm poison. It's sugar, and any fool ought to know it. It's better sugar than you ever had in your house, though, you old gorilla, and I don't wonder you thought you were poisoned."

It is needless to add that all hands got well after that and that there was no more seen of the sugar agent or the detective or the expected salesman.

Mike had the fun of getting full without dying, as he had expected, and no one could blow him up for it afterwards.

Nibbsey had to scrub the office floor, however, and he considered that adding insult to injury.

It was Roger who had put up the job, and the sugar man and the detective was a friend of his, gotten up for the occasion.

Muldoon did not know that the young

fellow had put up the snap, however, until three or four days afterwards, when Roger happened to drop a poison label out of his pocket.

"So it wor ye, be heavens, phwat put up that job an uz, wor it?" muttered Muldoon. "Faix, I might have known it. It wor looky for ye, me chappie, that I didn't find it before; av I had yez wud have had no spindin' money this month."

One pleasant day soon after this, Muldoon, dressed in his most stunning style, started out for a walk. He had not gone very far, when a man, arrayed even more gorgeously than himself, stopped in front of him and held out his hand.

It was more like a paw, being big and hairy, but covered with rings, among which were several huge sparklers.

The fellow was a walking jewelry shop, in fact, for he had rings on every finger, wore a monstrous double-ender gold watch chain, extending straight across his plaid waist-coat, his cuff-buttons were as big as dominoes, and a regular lighthouse diamond gleamed in his red scarf.

He wore a high white hat, fancy gaiters to his shoes, and carried a regular club of a stick.

You could see that he was a tough, but a tough of the better sort, although you could never make anything else out of him.

"Hallo, Mul, old man, how are yer, anyhow?" he asked. "Where yer been so long? I hain't seen yer in a dog's age. How is tings? Come and take a geyser!"

"Yez have me at an advantage, me friend," said Muldoon. "I do not appear to be able to place ye in the category av me acquaintances."

"What! Yer don't know me? Mebby yer ain't Terrence Muldoon?"

"Oh, yis, I don't deny thot. I am Terrence Muldoon, be heavens, and I'm proud of it, but that fact t'rows no light on the subject av yer own identity, me mon."

"What! Yer don't know der feller what heeled fur yer when yer was runnin' fur Alderman? Don't yer remember der boy what set 'em up when yer went to Europe and gave yer der bully send off when yer come back?"

"It strikes me very forcibly that there wor siveral av thim," said Muldoon, musingly.

"And yer hain't furgot der man what worked fur yer when yer was 'lected Senator? Don't tell me yer have furgot yer old pal of der east side."

"Yer face do seem familiar to me neow that I luck at ye again," remarked Muldoon, "but yer name has gon' from me mimory entoirely, so it have."

"Ah go on," snorted the tough. "Why, when yer was down on yer luck, over on der west side, I got yer on der force. Don't yer remember? You and me was old pals, Mul. Yer can't forget that, kin yer?"

"It's not Mulcahey?" asked Muldoon, trying to remember the man's name, whose face he now began dimly to recall.

"No, it ain't."

"Nor Casey, is it?"

"Ah go on, you know it well enough," was the answer.

"Oh, let me see now, is it—is it—it's not Brannigan."

"Ah, what's der matter wid yer anyhow, Mul?" retorted the other in disgust. "Yer know me if yer only think a minnit. Who was it that nominated yer at der primary?"

"Oh, yis, be heavens, I have it now, it's Murty Whalen."

"Well, o' course it is and if yer'd tort yer'd ha' knowed it fust off. Yer a doin' well wid a hotel yer are got, I hear?"

"Oh, yis, I've nothing to complain about. Are ye in politics, still, Murty?"

"I'm in anyting dat's got any money in it, see?" answered Whalen. "I ain't hangin' back when dere's any rocks ter be made. Where yer goin', Mul? Have a spray?"

"Do yez mean a dhrink? Well, I don't mind."

Now that Muldoon recognized an old acquaintance he did not mind being sociable, but he was shy of strangers.

Suddenly the heeler paused, took Muldoon by the top button of his coat, and said:

"Say, Mul, I've got suthin' funny for yer. It seems easy, but it ain't. You get stuck

You couldn't hear more than half of this speech, however, on account of the noise.

"Come an," said Muldoon. "It's a put up job. We'll shake him an the next corner."

The quartette made a lively break, followed by the band, playing "Johnny Get Your Gun."

On the next corner Mr. Burns and the walking delegate deserted the gang and fled in opposite directions.

Muldoon looked around, the band still playing, and said to Mike:

"We'll stick together, won't we?"

"Betcher life," said Mike.

Then they started for an elevated railroad station, there being one quite handy.

As they climbed the steps, Muldoon said to Mike:

"We've got rid av thim at last, be heavens."

Muldoon thought he had, but here was where he made a mistake.

That band had been hired by Roger to follow Muldoon, the leader had been paid five dollars for doing the same, and he meant to earn his money.

The Dutchman climbed the steps behind Muldoon and Mike, paid in their little nickels like men, and took seats in the same car with Muldoon and Mike.

Our friends did not notice them at first, but it was not long before they did.

Hardly had the train got under way, before those Dutchmen began to play again, and right in the car, too.

"Be heavens, we're haunted!" cried Muldoon. "I didn't go undher anny laddher to-day, Mike."

The brakeman came in, went up to the leader, and said:

"Hey, yer can't play in this car, don't yer know it?"

"Ya, I could play once. Didn't you heard me?"

"Well I say yer can't, see, and that settles it."

"I dinks you vas a liar once. I could blay, off I couldn't you wouldn't heard some moosic, ain't it?"

"Well, yer can't play, I tell yer," persisted the guard who knew nothing about moods and tenses.

"Off you don't wanted me to play once, you was better speak to dot mans, he was the boss."

The leader indicated Muldoon, and went on playing.

The brakeman went up to Muldoon and said in that polite manner so common among elevated railroad employees:

"Saay! if yer don't tell dat band o' yours to stop playin' you'll get chucked off der train, see, and don't yer forget it. What do yer take this road fur, a circus?"

"Go on, ye chicken-witted idjut," retorted Muldoon. "The band don't belong to me."

"Der Dutchman says it does."

"He's a liar, it doesn't."

Away went the guard and by that time a station was reached and he had to tend to business.

"Fifty-third! Step lively! Passengers off first!"

"Come on," whispered Muldoon. "We'll get off the rear ind av the car, and the Dutchman will be taken on."

He and Mike slipped away, unobserved as they supposed. The Dutchman was up to snuff, however, and saw them.

Hardly had Muldoon and Mike gone half a block from the station when they heard the familiar strains of that same old band, playing "Do not forget me."

"Dey're onto us, Mul," said Mike, "we'd better take a street car back to der hotel."

"Is this wan av yer jokes, Mike?" asked Muldoon, suspiciously.

"Wishermaydie if it is, Mul," returned Mr. Growler, earnestly.

"Do yez think the wockin' diligate or the insane asylum pote put it up on us?"

"No, course not. It was just as bad for dem as for us."

"Well, somebody did. Let's skip. Here's a hack—they can't get in that, be heavens."

They both jumped into the hack, and Muldoon gave the order to be driven to the hotel at full speed.

"We've distanced them, so we have," muttered Terry when he and Mike dismissed the cab and flew into the hotel.

Yes, they had—in their minds.

Scarcely five minutes later a band was heard playing in front of the place.

The tune was: "Call me back again."

Muldoon glared savagely out at the window.

It was that same old little German band.

PART XXVI.

SES, that persistent band was outside and playing for all it was worth.

It was not a melodious band, its only purpose apparently being to make as much noise as possible.

Its members did not seem to care a whit about time or quantity of harmony, each one going it alone and such trifles as being a bar or two in front or behind the leader not troubling them in the least.

The leader played a very loud and very brassy cornet, and you could hear him at all events and he carried the tune along, but the others seemed to play what and when they liked, without any reference to him in the least.

You could not properly call the sounds thus produced by the name of music, they were discords pure and simple.

If noise be music, then the sounds made by that congregation of Dutchmen, laid clean over the song of the morning stars, the music of the spheres or the finest symphony ever played.

That band was in earnest, however, and played with a devotion worthy of a better cause.

The reason for that was just this:

Roger, in hiring that collection of soloists, had told the leader and his fellow malefactors that Muldoon was very fond of music, although he did not like to say so, and if they followed him up persistently enough, and played long enough, he would give them all a big boodle.

That was enough to fire the hearts of those Dutchmen, they being naturally persistent and on the make.

Roger had told them where Muldoon had lived, and they had also kept the cab in sight so as not to miss the solid man or let him get away from them.

Now they were playing as if their lives depended upon it, presently changing to the tune of "Should Auld Acquaintance be Forgot."

This, as you may know, is taken rather slowly and solemnly, and that's the way the leader took it.

The double bass took it fast and belched out his notes in staccato time, the B flat, or A flat, or some other flat dragged it, and the clarinet sometimes played fast and sometimes slow, accordingly as the spirit moved him, or his wind gave out.

Muldoon did not stay at that window very long, you may be sure.

He rushed down-stairs, banged open the door and sailed out upon those Dutchmen.

"I tould yez I didn't want yez follyin' me, be heavens, and I won't have it. Go an away from here, or I'll call the polis and have yez all incarcerated. Begorra, yez wud wake the dead wid yer n'ise."

The band suddenly stopped, but only to resume operations in a moment with "God save the Queen."

It did not matter a cent to Muldoon that the Yankees had stolen that tune and christened it "America," calling it the National hymn; he knew it only as the British anthem, and hated it as much as the prince of darkness hates to go to church.

The frenzy of a roaring, tearing wild bull at having an auction flag waved in his face was as nothing compared to Muldoon's rage when that tune was started.

He rushed back into the house and said:

"Mike, do yez hear that dom English tune that they're playin'? If ye're a mon and a true Irish patriot, yer blood will boil over at that insult."

Mike, Dan, Nibbsey, Mr. Burns and Edward Geoghegan responded nobly to the call of their leader and hero.

Rufus also joined the gang, thinking that the tune was Irish and Wash followed because Rufus went in.

Nibbsey got out the hose, Burns produced his great poem, Dan found a club, Muldoon picked up an ax, Mike hauled out a big six shooter and the others picked up what happened to be nearest to hand.

It was the water that did the business, however.

The leader got soaked in the face, the double bass had his big tooter filled up to the muzzle and the other fellows received their first washing in months.

The Honorable Mike flourished his big guns but did not shoot, Muldoon waved his ax about in great style, thereby greatly endangering the lives of his friends, and Dan nearly paralyzed Wash with his club, fortunately hitting the coon on the head instead of on the shins.

It was the stream of water directed by the bell boy, however, that routed the enemy.

In three shakes the musicians had fled, likewise the crowd which they had drawn to the hotel.

"Hooray! we licked 'em!" cried the red-headed youth, as he began to retrace his steps.

He forgot all about the hose now, however.

Consequently, Rufus Jackson got a shower bath that knocked him clean off his feet. Muldoon's hat was sent flying by the jet and the Honorable Mr. Growler, of Nevada, received a bucketful of water right in his expansive and kalsomined shirt bosom.

"Hould on, ye robber, mind where yez be goin' wid that hose," yelled Muldoon. "Turn it off, put it down, luck out what yez be doin' ye red-headed monkey."

"Oh Geel! I soaked old whiskers and knocked off de boss's dicer," chuckled Nibbsey, turning off the water from the nozzle and dropping the hose.

Then the gang retreated to the office, Nibbsey handed in the hose, shut the water off, wiped his hands on his checked jumper, danced a jig and began to warble.

"Oh, she's my daisy, she's my dandy, She's awfully putty, she is so very handy; I met her in the evening down by the brook And next Sunday afternoon me and my pretty Louise is agoin' to get married, you can bet yer—"

"Hould on, hould on! Sure, I think that's a little worse than the music the Dutch band gave us," howled Muldoon. "Turn the hose on yerself, ye young imp, and give us a rest."

"Ah, youse fellies are all jealous o' me, dat's what's dematter, boss," said Nibbsey as he faded away.

"The abrupt manner in which that coterie of discord makers departed from this vicinity strongly reminds me of a description in my great poem," said Mr. Burns.

He thereupon, without further prelude, parley, preamble, apology, explanation or excuse whatsoever, recited the same.

"Down the rocks ran Glorianna hurrying
Scurrying, helter skelter, headlong in her
Haste precipitate, jumping, gliding, tumbling,
Falling, scrambling, genuflecting and
Now hustling, like some huge and mighty
Boulder rolling down the rocks black
And dark frowning, so went Glorianna."

"Faith, I'm glad she's fallen off thim rocks at last," muttered Muldoon, with a sigh of relief.

"Reckon she saw a mouse or a bug or maybe a spider," remarked Michael Growler. "Dat would send a woman hustling quicker'n anything I ever seen."

"Nay—nay, it was nothing so worldly, so earthy as that which caused the maiden's haste," said Burns. "Let me recite the passages which follow, and you will see the reason of her mad flight down the rocks."

"No, yez don't," interrupted Muldoon. "I allowed yez to finish the other verse, but I'll be parlyzed av I'll let yez inflict anny more av it on us. Go recite yer pomes to an aujence av dummies. It won't hurt thim, and they'll make no disparaging remarks."

"Dat kind o' potry goes fust class wid der kind o' music der Dutch band has been givin' us," observed the lily of Nevada. "Set it to dat kind o' music and get a lot of crazy people ter sing it and yer'll make yer fortune, Burns."

"Bah! you have no soul for real poetry," replied the solemn visaged poet, as he took himself away.

"I wondher what med the band play for us anyhow?" asked Muldoon, with a far away look upon his Miltonian brow.

"Have anny av yez seen Roger, the day?"

"Ain't seen him since grub time," said Mr. Growler. "He's off mashin' somewhere, I suppose, or takin' in a matinee." "Av I thot it wor him that hired that collection av lunatics to make a disturbance forninst the house," said Muldoon, "I'd break his jaw, av he is Mrs. Muldoon's own son, be heavens."

However, when Roger at last appeared, he gave nothing away and Muldoon was no wiser than before.

One evening, a few days later, the whole gang was seated in the office, the night being cool with a drizzling rain outside.

There was a goodly representation from the Emerald Isle, and there wasn't a man

"Phwat is?" asked Muldoon blowing out a cloud of smoke.

"Dat ting in der paper. It might be all right from white men, but I'll be blamed if I kin stand it from dem pig-tailed, moon-eyed, rat-eating, sons o' washtubs."

"To whom do yez refer be that terrum, Mr. Growler."

"Ah, them Chinamen, o' coorse. Who would I mean. I ain't down on furriners like some folks, but I'd fire every blamed Chinaman out of der country, dat's wot I'd do, if dey axed me."

"Yis, they do be monopolizin' the laundhry business and they have their eye on the chestnut thrade, and they niver go to church," said Muldoon, "but they can't

"Phwat is it, Terry," asked Dan, looking up.

"Yis, go an an' tell us," urged Edward Geoghegan.

"Read it, Muldoon," suggested Mr. Burns.

"Go on an' read it, boss," said Nibbsey, sticking his novel in his pocket. "Dem ducks can't read."

Muldoon put on his gold-rimmed eyeglasses, stood under the light and read as follows:

"A special from Tacoma, states that at Guzzler's Gulch, a settlement some fifteen miles to the east, an Irishman named Mac Pelt was lately tied to a tree by fifteen Chinamen, who then pelted him with



He was mauled all over the place. There wasn't one of that gang that did not do something to that unfortunate Chinaman. "We'll get our revenge this time, byes."

there who had not come from over the water.

Muldoon was smoking, Dan and Edward Geoghegan were playing a quiet game of forty-five, Mr. Growler was reading a paper with his feet on the fender, the poet was playing checkers with Mulcahey who had dropped in to spend the evening, Nibbsey was reading the life of "Jim-Dandy Ned, the terror of the Suwanee River, or the Trail of Blood and the Avenger's Oath," being deeply interested therein, and Teddy Doyle, a neighbor from across the way, was playing solitaire with a greasy pack of cards while waiting for Nibbsey to finish his novel.

It was a scene of calm contentment to be presently rudely broken in upon and changed to one of discord, war and strife.

Mr. Growler was the first one to break the silence.

He took his feet off the fender, threw the paper down, got up in great wrath and remarked in his characteristic explosive style:

"Well, I'm a bald-headed old Quakery chump, I am and I don't mind being kicked all over der town, but that's more'n I kin stand."

vote, be heavens, and New York is still strongly democratic."

"I don't care if dey do take all der washing business," snorted Mike, "and I don't care how dey vote, but when they goes to running the Irish, dem yaller-faced heathens abusing a Tipperary man an' a good citizen, dat's what makes me mad."

"Who's been abusin' the stone thrower?" demanded Muldoon. "Sure, a Tipperary mon can down a Chinayser ivery toime."

"So he can, but fifteen or twenty is big odds, and when yer have yer hands tied, ain't it? We don't want der Chinaman here anyhow. Italians is bad enough, but Chinesers is wuss."

"Where do it say that fifteen or twenty Chinaysers licked wan Irishman?" asked Muldoon, picking up the paper.

"Right dere in front where der big letters is," muttered Mike.

Muldoon read a few lines and then he jumped up, danced a hornpipe, shook his fist and cried:

"Oh, the vilyans! Oh, the robbers! Wor there iver such an outrage? Oh, glory, av I'd a been there wanst! The Chinase must go, be heavens, after that."

stones, clubbed him with sticks, cut off one side of his whiskers, shaved his head and painted it green, made him say Irishmen were no good and then compelled him upon threats of death to kiss all their feet."

"Be heavens, did yez ever hear av such an outrage?" sputtered Muldoon, dashing the paper to the floor.

"It tuck fifteen av them to do it, so it did," muttered Dan.

"And they had to tie him to a tree, then," growled Edward Geoghegan.

"Ah, thim Chinese is no good," snorted Mulcahey. "The Irish ought to hang every wan of them."

"They're runnin' dacint min out av the country, so they are."

"Tarrin' and featherin' is what the hay-thens want."

"Begob, let me see a Chinaser come in to this place," muttered Muldoon. "It would be worth his life, be heavens."

Just then the door opened.

Muldoon's dream was realized.

The new comer was a Chinaman.

His lucky star was eclipsed when he thought of coming into the hotel.

It so happened that the Major not satisfied with the way his clothes were done up

in the hotel, had sent for a Chinaman to come and get them.

The real reason was, that he thought Muldoon charged too much, though such was not the case.

It was an evil day for that Mongolian who was sent for by Major Buster and would be marked in his calendar ever afterwards with a piece of crepe.

He waddled in, a basket on his arm, a broad-brimmed felt hat on his head, felt shoes on his feet and an innocent look on his insipid, saffron colored mug.

"Me come fetchee Majee Bustee shirtee, collee, cuffee," he chattered. "Me washee, you givee."

Not more than half of what he said was understood.

"A Chinayser, be heavens!" said Muldoon. "Lock the dure, Mike!"

"We'll get square on him for what him fifteen did to that wan poor Mick."

"Soak der snoozer in der kisser and send him home on a wash-board."

"Wait till I turn de hose on de pigtail, boss!"

Mr. Growler turned the key in the lock and then put it in his pocket.

"Yer name is mud, yer snoozer," he remarked, "and wese fellers is dead onto yer."

Muldoon rolled up his sleeves, threw away his cuffs and looked wicked.

Mr. Burns, the poet, buttoned up his coat, put on his hat and spat on his hands.

Mulcahey threw out his quid, took his coat off and remarked that he always killed Chinamen on Friday, and that the time had come.

All these preparations boded no good for that Chinaman.

He tumbled to that fact and tried to slope.

"Me makee stakee, me wantee nexee housee!" he chirped.

"Yis, ye do, yez want it bad," said Muldoon, "but we want ye forst."

There was no mistaking the Solid Man's intentions as he advanced upon that Celestial.

"No hurtee Chinaman; me gettee out," said John.

"Yis, ye will—whin we've got troo wid yez."

"Let me get at him, boss!" cried Nibsey, grabbing up an ink-stand.

Smash!

The missile went over John's head and broke in pieces on the wall beyond.

This was the signal for the attack, however.

Muldoon punched the heathen in the nose to begin with.

Mike kicked the basket out of his hands and tore it into bits.

Dan got hold of his pig-tail and monkeyed with it in fine style.

Edward Geoghegan tore his blouse from top to bottom.

Mr. Burns blacked both his eyes in true sledge-hammer style.

Mulcahey caused the vital fluid to rush from his nose in a flood.

Nibsey pelted him with lumps of coal, hitting the mark every time.

Teddy Doyle kicked him in the shins, yanked his queue, and did a war-dance on his feet.

The whole gang went for him, in fact.

They pulled him around the room by his pigtail.

They stood him on his head and turned his clothes inside out.

They emptied the spittoons down his neck and put one on his head.

He was kicked, punched and mauled all over the place.

There wasn't one of that gang that did not do something to that unfortunate Chinaman.

"We'll get our revenge this time, byes."

"Soak the snoozer!"

"Pull his pigtail out!"

"Cut it off annyhow!"

"Slug him in the neck!"

"Kill him!"

The poor Chinaman yelled, screamed, begged and pleaded to be allowed to go, but it was no use.

He tried to retaliate on his tormentors, but they were too many for him.

Both eyes blacked, his nose bleeding, his lip cut, his cheeks scratched, his clothes in rags, his shoes a wreck, his queue denuded of half its length and the rest nearly pulled

out by the roots, he did indeed present a sorry looking spectacle.

Those Micks had got square on him with a vengeance.

He would remember that day with bitter bewailings for so long as he lived.

The only reason that those mad Irishmen did not kill him was because they probably thought that a Chinaman was not worth hanging for.

Finally they all fell upon him at once, and a terrible melee ensued.

You could not tell to other from which in the confusion.

All hands fell upon the floor, and Wun Lung was nearly smothered.

"Take yer boot out aw me mout', ye snoozer!" cried Dan.

Then the Micks disentangled themselves and got up off the floor.

That gave the heathen a breathing spell for a moment.

He grabbed it quick and put it to the best possible use.

He made a mad dash for that front door without any unnecessary delay.

Crash!

Smash!

Through the glass he went in a jiffy, like a cannon ball through cheese.

"Well, he's gon' at last," said Muldoon, wiping the sweat from his reeking head,

"but we had plinty av fun wid him, and the wrongs av ould Ireland have been avinged, be heavens."

PART XXVII.

MULDOON had forgotten one thing. His friends had amused themselves with that Chinaman to their hearts' content.

The latter had only escaped at last by jumping slam bang through a glass door.

It never occurred to Muldoon that the Celestial might harbor thoughts of revenge.

That he might try to get even did not enter into his calculations.

Neither he nor the rest imagined for a second that Gin Sling, Wun Lung, or whatever his barbarous name was, might return.

"Let anny more fifteen Chinees thry to lick wan Irishman after this," muttered Muldoon, as he swabbed off his forehead.

Then he lighted a fresh cigar, resumed his seat by the fire, and puffed away as before.

The furniture was straightened out, things put in order, and the former scene of peace and contentment was reproduced.

It did not last for more than fifteen minutes, however.

That Chinaman was red hot for revenge.

When he finally got away, he hurried to find his friends.

To them he told the story of his wrongs, and cried for retribution.

They answered him in choice, tea-chest Mongolian that he should have it.

"Wung bung ptsky wow wow bing ching pststt wung," said one.

"We will wipe up the floor with the flannel mouth," it meant.

"Golong, oolong hyson pison ollagowal-lazimjohnsonbejabers," said another.

That was an awful threat, and all the monkey-faced heathens groaned.

"Let us go and walk on their collar buttons," was what it signified.

"Gum bung, chewing gum, horse car, no tickee no shirtee, bustalung, chtz skpz ftt bang!"

That one was simply blood-curdling in its malevolent intensity and vituperative vehemence.

"Irishman no good, got moss on his teeth, sell vote for gin, let us chew his ear off."

You can imagine that those wash tub jugglers meant strictly business when they talked like that.

There were twenty or more of them and they sallied forth, bent on blood.

Monk Eye, Sow Krot, Two Lung, Jim Dandy, No Gow and Gin Sling marched in the van.

Then came Whis Kee, Blan Dee, Ho Kee Po Kee, Big Bum and Sin Sing.

There were more of them, but I haven't the time to spell out their names and you could not pronounce them if I did.

They were all bad men and were down on Micks, sure enough.

Wun Lung knew the way back to the hotel, and thither he led them in a body.

They paused when they reached the place and jabbered together for a few seconds like a lot of monkeys.

Then the fun began.

First a shower of stones struck the office floor, shattering half the windows.

Another shower followed in hot succession, and there wasn't a single, solitary individual pane of glass left on that floor.

"Phwat's that?" cried Muldoon, jumping to his feet in a hurry.

Others of the crowd made the same remark.

"It's a hail storm," said Mike, who was the phenomenal liar as well as boaster of the crowd. "I've seen 'em in der West where der stones was as big as yer head."

In another moment he and all the gang found out what the matter was.

In rushed that horde of barbarians, with blood in their eye.

They were led by the feller with whom Muldoon and his coterie had had so much fun.

"Killee Ilishman, makee him stiffee," he sung out.

"Punchee snoot, blackee eye, givee him fittee."

"Cleanee whole placee lout, killee allee Ilish."

"Hi-ya, Chineee badee man, callee lazee inee bootee."

"Whoopee! bustee housee uppee, so be pletty klick!"

Then those heathens sailed in and got to work.

Every picture on the wall was thrown down, busted and rent asunder.

The telephone box was just smashed into smithereens before you could say "hallo" once.

The counter was made into kindling wood before you could speak of it.

The desk was broken open, the books torn to bits and thrown into the fire in two shakes.

There wasn't a chair that stood on more than one leg when that gang of Chinese marauders got through.

The only thing they could not destroy was the safe.

They made that look very sick, however, and dumped it over on its side.

Every single globe in the place was knocked silly, and the fixtures twisted all out of shape.

The window shades were pulled down and torn to tatters, the heathens using the rollers as clubs.

The rugs were chucked into the street to become the prey of wandering Italians.

The cuspidores were hurled about the room and finally went sailing through the paneless windows.

There was not a thing that you could mention that wasn't knocked into a cocked hat or chucked away.

The coal scuttles were jammed flat, the poker twisted into the semblance of a fish hook, and the shovel bent double.

Even the carpet was ripped up in places, and the red hot coals from the fire hustled out upon the oil-cloth.

All this time Muldoon and his gang were having lots of fun, of course.

Certainly, but it was funnier to the Chinamen than it was to the Micks.

Muldoon had his coat, vest and shirt ripped off his back to begin with.

Then he lost one-half of his lovely slugs and got a crack in the eye that made it seem as if a mule had toyed with it.

Dan got a confused nose, a black eye and a whack alongside the ear that caused him to think one-half of his head was gone.

As for the Honorable Mike, those Chinamen walked all over him.

They took away his pop, singed off his beautiful shoe-brush mustache, collared all his blazers, and tore his velvet smoking jacket to shreds.

Mulcahey was exceedingly regretful that he had dropped in on Muldoon that evening when the heathens finished with him.

He was nearly scalped, his coat was ripped up the back, his striped trousers fluttered about like streamers from a mast, and one eye was in the deepest mourning.

Edward Geoghegan and Mr. Burns did

not get any better than the rest of the crowd.

Burns looked as if he had been running through gas pipes, and Edward Geoghegan resembled a tramp more than anything else.

Nibbsey fought like a red-headed tiger, but it did not do him or the rest of the crowd any good.

His blue jumper was torn to shoe-strings, he lost his only suspender, those heathens pulled out his lovely red hair in handfuls, and his mouth was as big as three.

Teddy Doyle got off with a black eye, a loosened tooth and a bloody nose, not to mention that he had no pants to go home in.

There was the biggest noise you ever heard all this time, of course.

The Chinamen were yelling like lunatics, the others were shouting, and the women up-stairs were screaming.

They only came as far as the top of the first flight, but that was enough.

Washand Rufus remained down-stairs in the basement, considering that the safest place for them by all odds.

Well, the place was a wreck, and every one of those Irishmen in a similar condition.

Then the Chinamen concluded it was time to go.

They were just a trifle too late, however. You don't suppose that all that racket could go on without attract ing attention, do you?

Certainly not, and the police got wind of the row in short order.

First two coppers saw the fuss, but they knew that they could do nothing.

They hurried away, and got more men, and, just as the invaders were thinking of going home, they raided the place.

There was a dozen of them, and each had a good, long, tough nightstick, as well as a revolver.

Those cops gathered in the whole crowd in short order.

Half a dozen Chinamen did managa to escape, but the rest were collared.

The same thing happened to Muldoon, Mike, Mulcahey and the rest.

Explanations were of no avail, and the whole gang was lugged off to the station-house.

Nibbsey and Teddy Doyle had to go as well as the rest, and Mr. Burns' declaration that he was a poet had not the slightest weight.

The whole gang and the greater part of the Chinamen were taken away and clapped into cells to remain over night.

Roger was out of town visiting a chum in Boston, and so knew nothing of the racket.

"They put me in a cell, be heavens, just like anny common thief," growled Muldoon, "and I wor only definidin' me own property. Sure, the polis have no discretion these days at all. Begorry, when I lived down town we had manny a row worse than this and not a worrud wor said."

"It's the last time that iver I'll go to see ye av an avenin', Muldoon," said Mulcahey from an adjoining cell. "Yez always did bring me bad luck."

"Wait till I see der judge," declared the Honorable Mike; "I'll make him give dem Chinamen ten years all around."

"Faix, they orter get a hundred, and afther that be sint up for life!" added Dan.

"Hey, boss!" sang out Nibbsey, as good-natured as ever; "dey haven't given me room enough to do my song and dance in here but I kin sing it if yer like."

"Shut up there, you fellows, and don't wake everybody in the neighborhood!" growled a copper, coming down the alley.

"I say, me mon, let me out of this! It's an outrage, so it is! I'm Terry Muldoon, and yez have no right to lock me up."

"Shut up, or I'll report you."

"I'll not shut up! I can give bail, and I demand to see the captain or the sergeant."

The man went away without a word, and Muldoon called after him in vain.

Presently two more appeared, and one of them said:

"Say, you fellers want to shut up, or you'll get six months and a hundred dollars."

"I can give bail," snorted Muldoon, "and

I demand the rights av a free born natheralized American citizen."

"There ain't any one here to take bail now, and you'll have to wait till morning."

That's just what they did have to do, the whole gang of them.

There was no sleep to be had, and nobody wanted to sing except Nibbsey, and they would not let him.

Mr. Burns, the poet, felt too sad and all broken up to give any extracts from his great poem, and they were spared that much, to say the least.

In the morning they were all greeted with a surprise.

This was no less than being all hustled into the Black Maria and carted off to the Fifty-seventh street police court.

Muldoon greatly resented this last indignity, and swore to have the captain and sergeant both bounced if they permitted it.

That did not do any good, however, and in he was hustled.

"I'm Terrence Muldoon, ex-alderman, ex-senator, and great American traveler," he protested, "and I'll let every newspaper in New York know how I've been treated, be heavens."

"Shut up, you big gawk, you ain't Muldoon," and the door was closed upon the solid man.

He certainly did not look like himself, and no one was to be blamed for not knowing him.

The whole crowd went away in the corporation coach and were dumped out at the police court.

When the case came up, the Chinamen all began talking at once and at the top of their voices.

"It's a lie, whatever they're saying!" yelled Muldoon, jumping upon his feet.

Up also sprang Mr. Growler, Dan, Edward Geoghegan, Mr. Burns and all the rest.

They all talked as loud and as fast as they could, and the din was something frightful.

"Silence!" yelled the court, hammering on the desk with his gavel till it split in half.

The Chinamen continued to jabber and Muldoon kept up the argument until the court remarked:

"See here, McGinty, if you don't shut up I'll give you six months on the Island."

For a moment Muldoon was speechless with indignation.

Then his wrath broke out in a torrent and there was no restraining him.

"Me name is not McGinty," he cried, "it's Terrence Muldoon, and I kape a hotel and all the city knows me, from Sandy Hook to Harlem. Them Chinaysers came into me place lasht night and claned it out, and I want yez to give them all a year apiece."

"We'll hear what the Chinamen have to say first, your honor," interposed a lawyer. "This man is accused of an aggravated assault on a Chinaman, and his place is considered a nuisance by the whole neighborhood."

"Ye're a liar!" promptly replied Muldoon. "Me hotil is a most respectable place, and ivery wan will tell yez the same."

"Silence!" said the judge, "or I will fine you for contempt of court. Let Two Lung speak."

The original Chinaman got up, winked the other eye, one being closed, and said:

"Me go hotel lassee night, getee washee for Majee Bussee. Boss man him lockee door, Ilishmans all punchee me, hitee me, kickee me, give me blazee and tlow me outee windee. Me go getee glang, go light stlaight back and cleanee out whole placee."

"Ten dollars," said the judge. "You had no business to take the law into your own hands like that."

"You givee me ten dollee?" asked the heathen, with a smile.

"No, you give me ten dollars or go to jail for ten days, you and the whole gang."

"Me gibee you fivee dollee, me no lich, me poo' man."

"Well, we'll make it five, but if you come up here again you'll get a month on the Island."

"All lite, me givee you fivee dollee you lettee me go."

"Yes. You are discharged."

The Chinamen were led away and Muldoon opened his eyes.

"Is that all yez give 'em?" he gasped.

"Yes. You had no business to pitch upon one Chinaman like that, eight or ten of you."

"I had not, hey?" snorted Muldoon. "What about fifteen Chinayse out West settin' upon wan poor Irishman, trowin' stones at him, tying him to a tree, shaving his head and paintin' it green? Begob, when I read that I wor mad enough to kill twinty av the haythins, and just thin wan av the smiling, yaller-jawed gawks came into me hotil, into the front door too, the ould stuff, as av the cellar wasn't good enough for um, and thin I wint for him."

"Where did fifteen Chinamen abuse one Irishman?"

"Out West. I read it in the paper last night."

"That story is all a hoax and is denied this morning. Some wag of a reporter got it up. Maybe you don't know that yesterday was the first of April."

"It's nothin' to me av it was. Yez have no right to let thim haythins go for five dollars' fine. They've med a wreck av me hotel offis and av the polis had not arrived when they did the whole place wud be burned down."

"I consider you the aggressor, Mr. Muldoon, and I shall have to impose a heavy fine, and—"

Then Muldoon and all the rest got after the court.

They stood on chairs, on tables, on the railing and on each other, and talked themselves hoarse.

The whole gang all spoke at once and the noise was deafening.

"Thirty days all around!" thundered the judge. "Next case."

That rather sobered Muldoon's crowd and they kept pretty quiet.

"It's thirty dollars yez mean, yer Honor," said Muldoon. "It wud be worth yer sit-ti-wation to give a man av me importance thirty days, and I think yez had better—"

They all began talking at once again and making a terrible noise.

"Shut up!" howled the court, "or I'll make it six months. Thirty dollars all around. Take them away."

The sentence was afterwards reduced to ten dollars all around, and Muldoon had to pay it.

There were eight of them in all and that little racket cost him eighty dollars besides costs, which raised it up to over a hundred.

"It's an outrage, be heavens, and I hope that jidge'll never be reapp'nted," said Muldoon when he paid his money over. "I wish now I'd killed the Chinaman, begorry."

It was a sorry looking gang that went back to the hotel and a fine looking place the latter was when they got there.

"The devil take the Chinase annyhow," growled Muldoon when he entered. "It's all their fault. Look at the place now. Faix, it'll take five hundherd dollars to put it in ordher again. Me trade is ruined and thim yaller divils got away wid five dollar fines. Mike Growler, ye're an ass for iver showin' me that paper. I'll niver take it again av it wor the only wan in New York."

Then Muldoon went off, had a bath and breakfast and went to bed, the place being closed for the day.

"Av it had been Roger that had did this," he observed, "I'd have murdered him."

"Av Roger had been here the thing wud niver have happened, retorted Mrs. Muldoon. "The bye wud niver have let yez make such a fool av yerself."

"Begob, I think yez are right, Bedalia," said Muldoon, "and I'm sorry that the bye was out av the house."

PART XXVIII.

ALL the glory of Muldoon's Hotel had departed.

It had seen its brightest days and was now in its decline.

That last racket was too much for it.

That was not all, however, that induced Muldoon to come to a certain resolution.

In the afternoon, being rested and refreshed, he went into the bar, the office being occupied by glaziers, paper hangers, etcetera.

There he found Mike, Dan, Mr. Burns and Edward Geoghegan.

"I want tin dollars from aich av yez," he remarked.

"Where wud I get tin dollars, Terry?" asked Dan, "whin I have no money but what yez gives me."

"Yer can't get any sugar out o' me, Mul," said Mr. Growler. "All I are got is tied up in railroad bonds and stocks. I ain't got no money, I ain't."

"I'd oblige ye in a minute, Muldoon," remarked Edward Geoghegan, "but there's been a strike in the union and I had to pay me assessments."

"Poets never have any money," added

in-law pulling yer leg ivery wanst in a while."

"Ah, go on, Mul; me and you is good friends, Mul," said Mike.

"Well, we may be, but yez had betther look for another sitiuation, me friend."

"What's that fur? Are yer goin' ter fire me?"

"No, not exactly, but I'm goin' to give up the hotel."

"You ain't, are yer?"

"Yes," and Muldoon walked away.

He had not really made up his mind to do so yet, but it did not need much to strengthen his half-formed resolution.

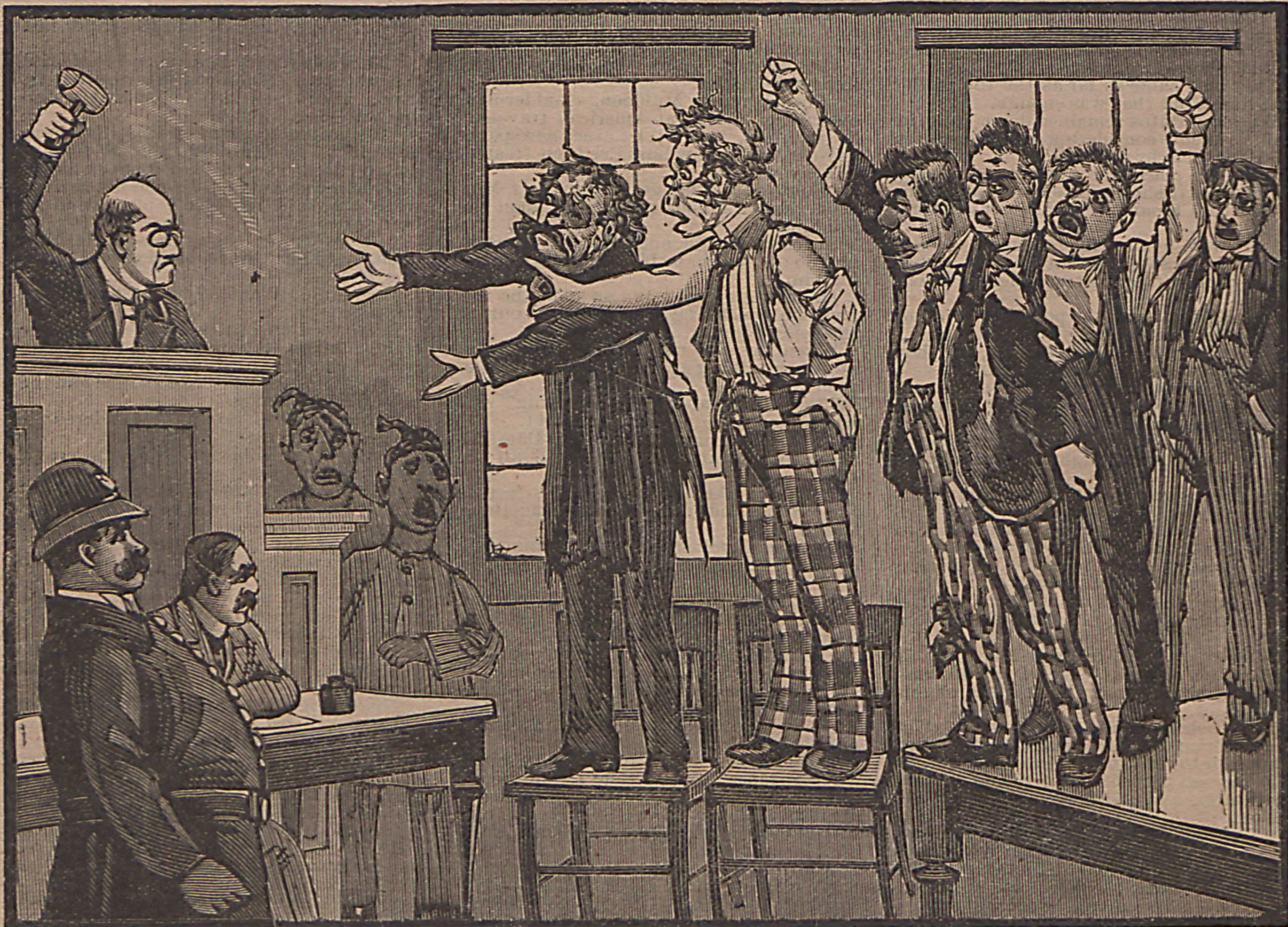
That evening half of his best people came

appearance, but Muldoon did not feel as much at home in it as he had formerly done, and he spent most of the time in his own room.

Then Rufus left, of his own accord, and not on account of any fight he had had with Muldoon.

"Scuse me, sah," he said, when giving notice to Muldoon, "but de summah time am comin' an' I allus goes up to Sa'toga fo' de summah, Mistah Muldoon, an' I'd like to leabe. Ef yo' wan' me I'll stay, or I kin come back to yo' fo' de wintah."

"Yez can go, Misther Jackson," said Muldoon. "I don't think I'll kape the hotel open anny longer. I only did it to have something to occupy me mind."



They stood on chairs, on tables, on the railing and on each other, and talked themselves hoarse. The whole gang all spoke at once and the noise was deafening. "Thirty days all around!" thundered the judge. "Next case."

Mr. Burns. "I do not think of such sordid affairs."

"Perhaps not," grumbled Muldoon, "but yez always manage to get money, all the same. Couldn't yez pay yer own fine, Mike?"

"Didn't have no money, I tell yer," said Mr. Growler.

"Phwat have yez been doin' wid yer salary for the last six months and more, since I opened the hotel?"

"Blowed it in."

"Suppose yer fine had a been thirty dollars, instead av tin?"

"Reckon you'd a had ter pay it, Mul," said the lily of Nevada, with agrin.

"Thin I don't see but what I've got to support ye and pay ye wages, too."

"Well, you're my brudder-in-law, ain't yer?" asked Mike.

"Phwat have that to do wid it, I'd like to know?"

"Why, what's der use of having relations if yer don't get all yer can out of 'em?" asked the unblushing Mike.

"It's bad enough to have a brother, an own wan, to luk after," retorted Muldoon, "widout having an ould bum av a brother-

to him and said they were going at the end of the week.

"It's too hilarious here for us," said a man who had his whole family in the place.

Another said that it was too far up-town a third said it wasn't far enough, one said it was too quiet, and another said that it was too noisy.

They all had some excuse, however, and Muldoon would not persuade them to stay if they wanted to go.

Major Buster borrowed the money to settle up with, and said:

"I shall leave at once, sah. Your hotel is too common fo' a Southern ge'man, sah. Theah is my account, sah. You may let my room at once, sah."

"I wor thinkin' av givin' ye notice to leave," said Muldoon, "but I wanted to be sure av me money forst."

You couldn't get ahead of Muldoon, not for a cent, when he got his back up.

Major Buster left, the dude boarder found cheaper quarters, the low-priced lodgers were turned out, anyhow, and scarcely more than a dozen people remained in the house.

The office was restored to its former cozy

Rufus promised to stay until the last moment, however, and Muldoon was not bothered with having to find a new cook.

When Roger came home from Boston he saw how the land lay, and said:

"Give it up, pop. You don't need to keep a hotel, and you've had all the fun out of it that you can expect."

"I think I'll do it," said Muldoon.

Two days later everybody went out and the hotel was closed.

On the next day passers-by noticed a sad looking man standing by the reading-room window, looking out upon the street.

He had his hands thrust deep down in his pockets and there was an air of deep dejection on his countenance.

The man was Muldoon.

All the furniture had been taken out and two big signs reading "Hotel to Let" were pasted on the windows.

"Yis, I won't be bothered wid the place anny more," he said, "and yet I've had fun in it and it's like losin' an ould friend to let it go."

Edward Geoghegan and Mr. Burns procured board down-town. Mike Growler and family hired a flat up in Harlem where the rents were cheap, and Dan and his wife